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My Friend Annabel Lee

by

Mary Mac Lane

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My Friend Annabel Lee

Mary Mac Lane

MY FRIEND ANNABEL LEE

BY

Mary MacLane

Chicago
Herbert S. Stone and Company
MCMIII

Univ. of California

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Issued September 1, 1903

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO

LUCY GRAY, IN CHICAGO

THIS BOOK

AND ONE PALE LAVENDER FLOWER OF AMARANTH

MONTREAL

JULY, 1903

434883

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

My Friend Annabel Lee

I

THE COMING OF ANNABEL LEE

BUT the only person in Boston town who has given me of the treasure of her heart, and the treasure of her mind, and the touch of her fair hand in friendship, is Annabel Lee.

Since I looked for no friendship whatsoever in Boston town, this friendship comes to me with the gentleness of sun-showers mingled with cherry-blossoms, and there is a human quality in the air that rises from the bitter salt sea.

Years ago there was one who wrote a poem about Annabel Lee—a different

lady from this lady, it may be, or perhaps it is the same—and so now this poem and this lady are never far from me.

If indeed Poe did not mean this Annabel Lee when he wrote so enchanting a heart-cry, I at any rate shall always mean this Annabel Lee when Poe's enchanting heart-cry runs in my mind.

Forsooth Poe's Annabel Lee was not so enchanting as this Annabel Lee.

I think this as I gaze up at her graceful little figure standing on my shelf; her wonderful expressive little face; her strange white hands; her hair bound and twisted into glittering black ropes and wound tightly around her head.

Were you to see her you would say that Annabel Lee is only a very pretty little black and terra-cotta and white statue of a Japanese woman. And forthwith you would be greatly mistaken.

It is true that she had stood in ex-

tremely dusty durance vile, in a Japanese shop in Boylston street, for months before I found her. It is also true that I fell instantly in love with her, and that on payment of a few strange dollars to the shop-keeper, I rescued her from her surroundings and bore her out to where I live by the sea—the sea where these wonderful, wide, green waves are rolling, rolling, rolling always. Annabel Lee hears these waves, and I hear them, at times holding our breath and listening until our eyes are strained with listening and with some haunting terror, and the low rushing goes to our two pale souls.

For though my friend Annabel Lee lived dumbly and dustily for months in the shop in Boylston street, as if she were indeed but a porcelain statue, and though she was purchased with a price, still my friend Annabel Lee is exquisitely human.

There are days when she fills my life with herself.

She gives rise to manifold emotions which do not bring rest.

It was not I who named her Annabel Lee. That was always her name—that is who she is. It is not a Japanese name, to be sure—and she is certainly a native of Japan. But among the myriad names that are, that alone is the one which suits her; and she alone of the myriad maidens in the world is the one to wear it.

She wears it matchlessly.

I have the friendship of Annabel Lee; but for her love, that is different.

Annabel Lee is like no one you have known. She is quite unlike them all. Times I almost can feel a subtle, conscious love coming from her finger-tips to my forehead. And I, at one-and-twenty, am thrilled with thrills.

Forsooth, at one-and-twenty, in spite of

Boston and all, there are moments when one can yet thrill.

But other times I look up and perchance her eyes will meet mine with a look that is cold and penetrating and contemptuous and confounding.

Other times I look up and see her eyes full of indifference, full of tranquillity, full of dull deadly quiet.

Came Annabel Lee from out of Boylston street in Boston. And lo, she was so adorable, so fascinating, so lovable, that straightway I adored her; I was fascinated by her; I loved her.

I love her tenderly. For why, I know not. How can there be accounting for the places one's loves will rest?

Sometimes my friend Annabel Lee is negative and sometimes she is positive.

Sometimes when my mind seems to have wandered infinitely far from her I realize suddenly that 'tis she who holds it

enthralled. Whatsoever I see in Boston or in the vision of the wide world my judgment of it is prejudiced in ways by the existence of my friend Annabel Lee—the more so that it's mostly unconscious prejudice.

Annabel Lee's is an intense personality—one meets with intense personalities now and again, in children or in bull-dogs or in persons like my friend Annabel Lee.

And I never tire of looking at Annabel Lee, and I never tire of listening to her, and I never tire of thinking about her.

And thinking of her, my mind grows wistful.

II

THE FLAT SURFACES OF THINGS

"THERE are moments," said my friend Annabel Lee, "when, willy nilly, they must all come out upon the flat surfaces of things.

"They look deep into the green water as the sun goes down, and their mood is heavy. Their heart aches, and they shed no tears. They look out over the brilliant waves as the sun comes up, and their mood is light-hearted and they enjoy the moment. Or else their heart aches at the rising and their mood is light-hearted at the setting. But let it be one or the other, there are bland moments when they see nothing but flat surfaces. If they find all at once, by a little accident, that their best-loved is a traitor friend,

and they go at the sun's setting and gaze deep into the green water, and all is dark and dead as only a traitor best-beloved can make it, and their mood is very heavy—still there is a bland moment when their stomach tells them they are hungry, and they listen to it. It is the flat surface. After weeks, or it may be days, according to who they are, their mood will not be heavy—yet still their stomach will tell them they are hungry, and they will listen. If their best-loved cease to be, suddenly—that is bad for them, oh, exceeding bad; they suffer, and it takes weeks for them to recover, and the mark of the wound never wears away. But with time's encouraging help they do recover. But if," said my friend Annabel Lee, "their stomach should cease to be, not only would they suffer—they would die—and whither away? That is a flat surface and a very truth. And when they

consider it—for one bland moment—they laugh gently and cease to have a best-loved, entirely; they cease to fill their veins with red, red life; they become like unto mice—mice with long slim tails.

"For one bland moment.

"And, too, the bland moment is long enough for them to feel restfully, deliciously, but unconsciously, thankful that there are these flat surfaces to things and that they can thus roll at times out upon them.

"They roll upon the flat surfaces much as a horse rolls upon the flat prairie where the wind is.

"And when for the first time they fall in love, if their belt is too tight there will come a bland moment when they will be aware that their belt is thus tight—and they will not be aware of much else.

"During that bland moment they will loosen their belt.

"When they were eight or nine years old and found a fine, ripe, juicy-plum patch, and while they were picking plums a balloon suddenly appeared over their heads, their first delirious impulse was to leave all and follow the balloon over hill and dale to the very earth's end.

"But even though a real live balloon went sailing over their heads, they considered this: that *some other kids would get our plums that we had found.* A balloon was glorious—a balloon was divine—but even so, there was a bland moment in which the thought of some vicious, tow-headed Swede children from over the hill, who would rush in on the plums, came just in time to make the balloon pall on them.

"But," said my friend Annabel Lee, "by the same token, in talking over the balloon after it had vanished down the sky, there would come another bland moment

when the plums would pall upon them—pall completely, and would appear hateful in their eyes for having kept from them the joy of following the divine balloon. That is another aspect of the flat surfaces of things. And they must all come out upon the flat surfaces, willy-nilly.

"And," said Annabel Lee, glancing at me as my mind was dimly wistful; "not only must they come out upon the flat surfaces of things, but also you and I must come, willy-nilly.

"And since we *must* come, willy-nilly," added the lady, "then why not stay out upon the flat surfaces? Certainly 'twill save the trouble of coming next time. Perhaps, however, it's all in the coming."

III

MY FRIEND ANNABEL LEE

MY FRIEND Annabel Lee never fails to fascinate and confound me.

Much as she gives, there is in her infinitely more to get.

My relation with her never goes on, and it never goes back. It leads nowhere. She and I stop together in the midst of our situation and look about us. And what we see in the looking about is all and enough to consider.

And considering, I write of it.

IV

BOSTON

YESTERDAY the lady was in her most amiable mood, and we talked together—about Boston, it so happened.

"Do you like Boston?" she asked me.

"Yes," I replied; "I am fond of Boston. It fascinates me."

"But not fonder of it than of Butte, in Montana?"

"Oh, no," said I, hastily. "Butte in Montana is my first love. There are barren mountains there—they are with me always. Boston doesn't go to my heart in the least, but I like it much. I like to live here."

"I am fond of Boston—sometimes," Annabel Lee observed. "Here by the sea

it is not quite Boston. It is everything. This sea washes down by enchanted purple islands and touches at the coast of Spain. But if one can but turn one's eyes from it for a moment, Boston is a fine and good thing, and interesting."

"I think it is—from several points of view," I agreed.

"Tell me what you find that interests you in Boston," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"There are many things," I replied. "I have found a little corner down by the East Boston wharf where often I sit on cold days. The sun shines bright and warm on a narrow wooden platform between two great barrels, and I can be hidden there, but I can watch the madding crowd as it goes. The crowd is very madding down around East Boston. And I do not lack company—sometimes brave, sharp-toothed rats venture out on the

ground below me. They can not see the madding crowd, but they can enjoy the sunshine and hunt mice among the rubbish.

"The dwellers in East Boston—they are the poor we have always with us. They are not the meek, the worthy, the deserving poor. They are the devilish, the ill-conditioned—one with the wharf rats that hunt for mice. Except that the rats do occasionally try to clean their soft, gray coats by licking them with their little red tongues; whereas, the poor—But why should the poor wash? Are they not the poor?

"As I rest me between my two great barrels and watch this grewsome pageant, I think: It seems a quite desperate thing to be poor in Boston, for Boston is said to be of the best-seasoned knowledge and to carry a lump of ice in its heart. From between my two barrels in East Boston I

have seen humanity, oh, so brutal, oh, so barbarous as ever it could have been in merrie England in the reign of good old Harry the Eighth.——

"And so then that is very interesting."

"In truth it is so," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Boston is fair, and very fair.—Tell me more."

"And times," I said, "I sit in one of the window-seats on the stairway of the Public Library. And I look at the walls. A Frenchman with a marvelous fancy and great skill in his finger-ends has worked on those walls. He painted there the emblems of all the world's great material things of all ages. And over them he painted a thin gray veil of those things that are not material, that come from no age, that are with us, around us, above us—as they were with the children of Israel, with the dwellers in Pompeii, with

the fair cities of Greece and the inhabitants thereof.

"I have looked at the paintings and I have been dazzled and transported. What is there not upon those walls!

"I have seen, in truth, 'the vision of the world and all the wonder that shall be.'

"I have seen the struggling of the chrysalis-soul and its bursting into light; I have seen the divinity that doth sometime hedge the earth; I have looked at a conception of Poetry and I have heard the thin, rhythmic sounds of shawms and stringed instruments; and I have heard low, voluptuous music from within the temple—human voices like sweet jessamine; I have seen the fascinating idolatry of pagans—and I have seen, pale in the evening by the light of a star, the wooden figure of the Cross; I have leaned over the edge of a chasm and beheld the things of old—the army of Hannibal before

Carthage—the Norsemen going down to the sea in ships—the futile, savage fighting of Goths and Vandals; I have seen science and art within the walled cities, and I have seen frail little lambs gamboling by the side of the brook; I have seen night-shades lowering over occult works, and I have seen bees flying heavy-laden to their hives on a fine summer's morning; I have heard a lute played where a tiny cataract leaps, and the pipes of Pan mingled with the bubbling notes of a robin in mint meadows; I have seen pages and pages of printed lines that reach from world's end to world's end; I have seen profound words written centuries ago in inks of many colors; I have seen and been overwhelmed by the marvels of scientific things bristling with the accurate kind of knowledge that I shall never know; withal, I have seen the complete serenity of the world's face, as shown

by the brush of the Frenchman Chavannes.

"And over all, the nebulous conception of the long, ignorant silence.

"What is there not upon those wonderful walls!

"I sit in semi-consciousness in the little window-seat and these things swim before my two gray eyes. My mind is full of the vision of murmuring, throbbing life.

"But what a thing is life, truly—for marvelous as are these pictures, those that I have seen, times, down where the rats forage among the rubbish, are more marvelous still."

"Truly," said my friend Annabel Lee, "there is much, much, in Boston. Tell me more."

"Well, and there is the South Station," I went on. "Oh, not until one has ambled and idled away a thousand hours in that place of trains and varied peoples can one

know all of what is really to be found within its waiting-rooms.

"I have found Massachusetts there—not any Massachusetts that I had ever read about, but the Massachusetts that comes in from Braintree and Plymouth and Middleboro carrying a Boston shopping-bag; the Massachusetts that is intellectual and thrusts its forefinger through the handle of its tea-cup; the Massachusetts that eats soup from the end of its spoon; the Massachusetts that is good-hearted but walks funny; the Massachusetts that takes all the children and goes down to Providence for a day—each of the children with a thick, yellow banana in its hand; the Massachusetts that has its being because the world wears shoes—for it is intellectual and can make shoes.

"And in the South Station, furthermore, there are people from the wide world around. Actors and authors and artists

are to be seen coming in and going out and sitting waiting in the waiting-rooms. Some mightily fine and curious persons have sat waiting in those waiting-rooms, as well as dingy Italians with strings of beads around their necks.

"And in the South Station there are so many, many people, that, once in a long while, one can meet with some of those tiny things that one has waited for for centuries. In among a multitude of faces there may be a young face with lines of worn and vivid life in it, and with alert and much-used eyes, and with soft dull hair above it. In a flash one recognizes it, and in a flash it is gone. It is a face that means beautiful things and one has known it and its divineness a long, long time. And here in the South Station in Boston came the one gold glimpse of it.

"And I have seen in the South Station a strange scene: that of a mild Jew man

bearing the brunt of caring for his large family of small children, while their child-weary mother was allowed for once in her life to rest completely, sitting with her eyes closed and her hands folded. She might well rest tranquil in the thought that in giving birth to that small Hebraic army she had done her share of this dubious world's penance.

"And in the South Station, as much as anywhere, one feels the air of Boston.

"The air of Boston, too, is wonderful—and 'tis not free for all to breathe. 'Tis for the anointed—the others must content them with the untinted, unscented air that blows wild from mountain-tops and north seas. But for me, I have eyes wherewith to see—and since the air of Boston has color, I can see it. And I have ears wherewith to hear—and since the air of Boston has musical vibrations, I can hear it. And I have sensibility—

wherefore all that is pungent in the air of Boston, and all that is fine, and all that is art, and all that is beautiful, and all that is true, and all that is benign, and particularly all that is very cool and all that is bitterly contemptuous — are not wholly lost upon me.

"If all the persons who go to and fro at the South Station were heroes and breathed the air there and left their dim shadows behind them—as they do—I presume the South Station would be hallowed ground. They all are not heroes, but they breathe the air and leave their dim shadows, whatever they may be, and ever after the air of the South Station is tinctured. And since more than a half of these people are of Boston, the air is tinctured therewith.

"If you are civilized and conventional you may know and breathe this air. If you are not—well, at least you may stand

and contemplate it. And always one can bide one's time.

"My contemplation of it has interested me.

"The air of Boston is a mingling of very ancient and very modern things and ways of thinking that are picturesque and at times lead to something. The ancient things date back to Confucius and others of his ilk—and the modern ones are tinted with Lilian Whiting and newspapers and the theater.

'One is half-conscious of this as one contemplates, and one's thought is, 'Woe is me that I have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!' One exclaims this not so much that one considers oneself benighted, but that one is very sure that the air of Boston considers one so. To be sure, it ought to know, but, somehow, as yet one is content to bide one's time.

"But yes. There is a beatified quality

in the air of Boston. It is tinted with rose and blue. It sounds, remotely, of chimes and flutes. You feel it, perchance, when you sit within the subdued, brilliant stillness of Trinity church—when you walk among the green and gold fields about Brookline and Cambridge, where orchids are lifting up their pale, soft lips—when you are in the Museum of Fine Arts and see, hanging on the wall, a small dull-toned picture that is old—so old!

"Music is in the air of Boston. It pours into the heart like fire and flood—it awakens the soul from its dreaming—it sends the human being out into the many-colored pathways to see, to suffer, it may be—yes, surely to suffer—but to live, oh, to live!

"One can see in the mists the slender, gray figure of one's own soul rising and going to mingle with all these. In spite of the clouds about it, one knows its going and that it is well. It was long since said:

'My beloved has gone down into her garden to the bed of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.' And now again is the beloved in the garden, and in those moments, oh, life is fair"——

My friend Annabel Lee opened her lips—her lips like damp, red quince-blooms in the spring-time—and told me that there were times when I interested her, times when I amused her mightily, and times when in me she made some rare discoveries.

But which of the three this time was, she has not told.

V

A SMALL HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY

BUT Boston—or even Butte in Montana—is not to be compared to a lodging-place far down in the country: a tiny house by the side of a fishy, mossy pond, in summer-time, with the hot sun shining on the door-step, and a clump of willows and an oak-tree growing near; on the side of the house where the sun is bright in the morning, some small square beds of radishes, and pale-green heads of lettuce, and straight, neat rows of young onions, with the moist earth showing black between the rows; and a few green peas growing by a small fence; and on the other side of the little house grass will grow—tall rank grass and some hardy weeds, and perhaps a tiger-lily or two

will come up unawares. The fishy pond will not be too near the house, nor too far away—but near enough so that the singing of the frogs in the night will sound clear and loud.

Rolling hills will be lying fair and green at a distance, and cattle will wander and graze upon them in the shade of low-hanging branches. On still afternoons a quail or a pheasant will be heard calling in the woods.

The air that will blow down the long gentle uplands will be very sweet. The message that it brings, as it touches my cheeks and my lips and my forehead, will be one of exceeding deep peace.

I would live in the little house with a friend of my heart—a friend in the shadows and half-lights and brilliances. For if the hearts of two are tuned in accord the harmony may be of exquisite tenor.

In the very early morning I would sit

on the doorstep where the sun shines, and my eyes would look off at the prospect. Life would throb in my veins.

In the middle of the forenoon I would be kneeling in the beds of radishes and slim young onions and lettuce, pulling the weeds from among them and staining my two hands with black roots.

In the middle of the day I would sit in the shade, but where I could see the sunshine touching the brilliant greenness, near the house and afar. And I could see the pond glaring with beams and motes.

In the late afternoon I, with the friend of my heart, would walk down among the green valleys and wooded hills, by fences and crumbling stone walls, until we reached a point of vantage where we could see the sea.

In the night, when the sun had gone and the earth had cooled and the dark, dark gray had fallen over all, we would

sit again on the doorstep. It would be lonesome there, with the sound of the frogs and of night-birds—and there would be a cricket chirping. We would speak to each other with one or two words through long stillnesses.

Presently would come the dead midnight, and we would be in heavy sleep beneath the low, hot roof of the little house.

Mingled with the dead midnight would be memories of the day that had just gone. In my sleep I would seem to walk again in the meadows, and the green of the couutless grass-blades would affect me with a strange delirium—as if now for the first time I saw them. Each little grass-blade would have a voice and would shout: *Mary Mac Lane, oh, we are the grass-blades and we are here! We are the grass-blades, we are the grass-blades, and we are here!*

And yes. That would be the marvelous thing—that they were *here.* And would not the leaves be upon the trees?—and would not tiny pale flowers be growing in the ground?—and would not the sky be over all? Oh, the unspeakable sky!

In the dead midnight sleep would leave me and I would wake in a vision of beauty and of horror, with fear at my heart, with horrible fear at my heart.

Then frantically I would think of the little radish-beds outside the window—how common and how satisfying they were. Thus thinking, I would sleep again and wake to the sun's shining.

"You would not," said my friend Annabel Lee, "stay long in such a place."

I looked at her.

"Its simplicity and truth," said my friend Annabel Lee, "would deal you

deep wounds and scourge you and drive you forth as if you were indeed a money-changer in the temple."

VI

THE HALF-CONSCIOUS SOUL

ANNABEL LEE leaned her two elbows on the back of a tiny sandalwood chair and looked down at me.

We regarded each other coldly, as friends do, times.

"You," said Annabel Lee, "have a half-conscious soul. Such a soul that when it hears a strain of music can hear away to the music's depths but can understand only one-half of its meaning; but because it is half-conscious it knows that it understands only the half, and must need weep for the other half; such a soul that when it wanders into the deep green and meets there a shadow-woman, with long, dark hair and an enchanting voice, it feels to its depths the spirit of the green and the

voice of the shadow-woman, but can understand only one-half of what they tell: but because it is half-conscious it knows that it understands only the half, and must need weep for the other half; such a soul that when it is bound and fettered heavily, it knows since it is half-conscious, that it is bound and fettered, but knows not why nor wherefore nor whether it is well, which is the other half—and it must need weep for it; such a soul that when it hears thunderings in the wild sky will awaken from sleep and listen—listen, but since it is half-conscious it can only hear, not know—and it sounds like an unknown voice in an unknown language, telling the dying speech of its best-loved—it is frantic to know the translation which is the other half; such a soul that when life gathers itself up from around it and stands before it and says, Now, contemplate life, it contemplates, since it is

half-conscious, but it for that same reason strains its eyes to look over life's shoulders into the dimness—which is an impossible thing, and the other half; such a soul that when it finds itself mingling in love for its friend, and all, it enjoys, oh, vividly in all moments but the crucial moments, when it aches in torment and doubt—for it is half-conscious and so knows its lacking.

"Desolate is the way of the half-conscious soul," said Annabel Lee.

"The wholly conscious soul receives into itself things in their entirety without question or wonder: the half-conscious soul receives the half of things, and knowing that there is another half, it wonders and questions till all's black.

"The wholly conscious soul is different from the wholly unconscious soul in that the former is positive whilst the latter is negative—and they both in their nature

can find rest: but the half-conscious soul knows that it is half-conscious, still it knows not at what points it is conscious and at what points unconscious—for when it thinks itself conscious, lo, it is unconscious, and when it thinks itself unconscious it is heavily, bitterly conscious—and nowhere can it find rest.

"The wholly conscious soul holds up before its eyes a mirror and gazes at itself, its color, its texture, its quality, its desires and motives, without flinching, in the strong light of day; the wholly unconscious soul knows not that it is a soul, and never uses a mirror: but the half-conscious soul looks into its glass in the gray light of dusk—it sees its color, its texture, its quality, its desires—but its motives are hidden. Its eyes are wide in the gray light to learn what those, its own motives, are. It can not know, but it can never rest for trying to know.

"The wholly conscious soul knows its love, its sorrow, its bitterness, its remorse.

"The half-conscious soul knows its love —and wonders why it loves, and wonders if it really can love any but itself, and wonders that it cares for love; the half-conscious soul knows its sorrow—and marvels that it should have sorrow since it can grasp not truth; the half-conscious soul knows its bitterness, and realizes at once its right to and its reason for bitterness—but, thinking of it, the arrow is turned in the wound; the half-conscious soul knows its remorse, but it is convinced that it has no right to remorse, since it does its unworthy acts with infinite forethought.

"The wholly conscious soul is a chas tened spirit and so has its measure of happiness; the wholly unconscious soul is an unchastened spirit, for it deserves no

chastisement—neither has it any happiness, for it knows not whether it is happy or otherwise: but the half-conscious soul is chastised where it is not deserving of it, and goes unchastised where it is richly deserving of it—and so has no happiness, but instead, unhappiness.

"Woe to the half-conscious soul," said Annabel Lee.

"How brilliantly does the emerald sea flash in the sunshine before the eyes of the half-conscious soul!—but burns it with mad-fire.

"How melting-sweet is the perfume of the blue anemone to the sense of the half-conscious soul!—but burns it with mad-fire.

"How beautiful are the bronze lights in the eyes of its friend to the half-conscious soul!—that burn it with mad-fire.

"How joyous is the half-conscious soul

at the sounds of singing voices on water! —that burn it with mad-fire.

"How surely come the wild, sweet meanings of the outer air into the depths of the half-conscious soul!—but burn it with mad-fire.

"How madly happy is the half-conscious soul in still hours at sight of a solitary pine-tree upon the mountain-top!—that burns it with mad-fire.

"How tenderly comes Truth to the half-conscious soul in the dead watches of the night!—but burns it with mad-fire.

"Life is vivid, alert, telling to the half-conscious soul," said Annabel Lee.

"You," said Annabel Lee, "with your half-conscious soul, when you sit where the gray waves wash the sea-wall at high-tide, when you sit listening with your head bent and your hands dead cold, you think you realize your life—you think you know its hardness—you think you have

measured the cruelty they will give you; but you do not know. You know but half—you weep for the other half, though it be horror.

"Still, though you are but half-conscious, though you weep for the other half, when you sit listening with your head bent and your hands dead cold, where the gray waves wash the sea-wall at high-tide—yet you know some of each one of the things that are around you.

"Wonderful in conception is the half-conscious soul," said Annabel Lee.——

I looked hard at my friend Annabel Lee. Was she teasing me? Was she laughing at me? For she does tease me and she does laugh at me. And was she at either of these pastimes, with all this about a half-conscious soul?

But here again she left me ignorant of her thought, and there is no way of knowing.

VII

THE YOUNG-BOOKS OF TROWBRIDGE

THERE are two writers, among them all, to whom I owe thanks for countless hours of complete pleasure. Not the pleasure that stirs and fires one, but the pleasure which enters into the entire personality, and rests and satisfies a common, unstrained mind. 'Tis the same pleasure that comes with eating all by myself—eating peaches and a fine, tiny lamb chop in the middle of the day.

One of these two writers is J. T. Trowbridge who has writtten young-books.

Often I have thought, Life would be different, and duller colored, and less thickly sprinkled with marigolds-and-cream, had I never known my Trowbridge.

Often I have thanked the happy fate that put into my hands my first young-book of Trowbridge. 'Twas when I was fourteen—one day in October, when I lived in a flat, windy town that was named Great Falls, in Montana. Since that time I have never been without the young-books of J. T. Trowbridge. There have but seven years passed since then, but when seven years more, and seven years again, up to threescore, have gone, I still shall spend one-half my rest-hours, my pleasure-hours, my loosely-comfortable, unstrained hours with the young-books of Trowbridge.

When I go to a theater I enjoy it thoroughly. A theater is a good thing, and the actor is a stunning person—but how eagerly and gladly I come back into my own room where there is a faithful, little, tan deer standing waiting, all so pathetic and sweet, upon the desk.

When I go out into two crowded rooms among some fascinating persons that I have heard of before—women with fine-wrought gowns—I like that, too, and I wouldn't have missed it—but how utterly restful and adorable it is to come back to my own room where there is my comfortable quiet friend in a rusty black flannel frock, sitting waiting—and her hands so soft and good to feel.

When I read gold treasures of literature—Vergil, it may be, or a Browning, or Kipling—I am enchanted and enthralled. I marvel at these people and how they can write. I think how marvelous is writing, at last—but how gladly and thankfully, after two hours or three, I return back to these my young-books of Trowbridge.

They are about people living on farms, and they are written so that you know that red-root grows among wheat-spears,

and must be weeded out, and that the farmer's boys have to milk the cows mornings before breakfast and evenings after supper. For they have supper in the Trowbridge books—and it is even attractive and tastes good.

When the lads go to gather kelp to spread on the land, and are gone for the day by the seashore, they eat roasted ears of corn, and cold-boiled eggs, and bread-and-butter, and three bottles of spruce beer—and if you really know the Trowbridge books you can eat of these with them, and with a wonderful appetite.

When a slim boy of sixteen goes to hunt for his uncle's horse that had been stolen in the night (because the boy left the stable door unlocked), along pleasant country roads and smiling farms in Massachusetts—if you really know the Trowbridge books—the slim boy of sixteen is not more anxious to find the horse than

you are. When the boy and the reader first start after the horse they are far too wretched and anxious to eat—for the crabbed uncle told them they needn't come back to the farm without that horse. But long before noon they are glad enough that they have a few doubled slices of buttered bread to eat as they go. When at last they come upon the horse calmly feeding under a cattle-shed at a county fair twenty miles away, they are quite hungry, and in their joy they purchase a wedge of pie and some oyster crackers, so that they needn't be out of sight of the horse while they eat. And the reader—if he really knows the Trowbridge books—would fain stop here, for there is trouble ahead of him. He would fain—but he can not. He must go on—he must even come in crucial contact with Eli Badger's hickory club—he must go with the boy until he sees him and the

horse at last safely back at Uncle Gray's farm, the horse placidly munching oats in his own stall, and the boy eating supper once more with appetite unimpaired, and the crabbed uncle once more serene. And—if you know Trowbridge's books—you can eat, too, tranquilly.

When a boy is left alone in the world by the death of his aunt and starts out to find his uncle in Cincinnati—if you know Trowbridge's books—you prepare for hardship and weariness, but still occasional sandwiches and doughnuts (but not the greasy kind). And always you know there must be a haven in the house of the uncle in Cincinnati. Only—if you know the Trowbridge books—you are fearful when you get to the uncle's door, and you would a little rather the boy went in to meet him while you waited outside. Trowbridge's uncles are apt to be so sour as to heart, and so bitter as to tongue, and

so sarcastic in their remarks relating to boys who come in from the country to the city in order that they—the uncles—may have the privilege of supporting them. Though you know—if you know the Trowbridge books—that Trowbridge's boys never come into the city for that purpose. The heavy-tempered uncles, too, are made aware of this before long, and change the tenor of their remarks accordingly—and after some just pride on the part of the nephews, all goes well. Whereupon your feeling of satisfaction is more than that of the boy, of the uncle, of Trowbridge himself.

But these roasted ears of corn and cold-boiled eggs are among the lesser delights of the young-books of Trowbridge. The most fascinating things in them are the conversations. They are so real that you hear the voices and see the expressions of the faces.

Trowbridge is one of the kind that listens twice and thrice to persons talking, so that he hears the key-note and the detail, and his pen is of the kind that can write what he hears. It is never too much, never too little; it is not noticeable at all, because it is all harmony.

It is entirely and utterly common.

And it is real.

In the young-books of Trowbridge, and nowhere else, I have heard boys talking together so that I knew how their faces looked, and how carelessly and loosely their various collars were worn, and their dubious hats. I have heard a grasping, grouty old man pound on the kitchen floor with his horn-headed cane—he had come over while the family were at breakfast to inform them that their dog had killed five of his sheep, and to demand the dog's life. I have heard the lessons and other things they said in a country

school-room sixty years ago, where boys were sometimes obliged, for punishment, to sit on nothing against the door. I have heard the extreme discontent in the voice of another grouty, grasping farmer when it became evident to him that he would be obliged to give up a horse that had been stolen before he bought him. But here I must quote, as nearly correctly as I can without the book:

"'And sold him to this Mr. Badger' (said Kit) 'for seventy dollars.'

"'Seventy gim-cracks!' exclaimed Uncle Gray, aghast. 'I should think any fool might know he's worth more than that.'

"He was thinking of Brunlow, but Eli applied the remark to himself.

"'I did know it,' he growled. 'That's why I bought him. And mighty glad I am now I didn't pay more.'

"'Sartin!' replied Uncle Gray; 'but didn't it occur to you 't no honest man

would want to sell an honest hoss like that for any such sum?'

"'I didn't know it,' said Eli, groutily. 'He told a pooty straight story. I got took in, that's all.'

"'Took in!' repeated Uncle Gray. 'I should say, took in! I know the rogue and I'm amazed that any man with common sense and eyes in his head shouldn't 'a' seen through him at once.'

"'Maybe I ain't got common sense, and maybe I ain't got eyes in my head,' said Eli, with a dull fire in the place where eyes should have been if he had had any. 'But I didn't expect this.'

"Kit hastened to interpose between the two men."

Always I have been sorry that the boy interposed just there.

I have read the book surely seven-and-seventy times. Each time this talk over the horse comes exceeding pungent to my

ears. How impossible it is to weary of Trowbridge, because there is no effort in the writing, and no effort in the reading, and because of a deep-reaching, never-failing sense of humor.——

How flat seem these words!

The young-books of Trowbridge can not be set down in words. What with the simplicity, what with the quality of naturalness, what with a delicate tenderness for all human things, what with the rare, rare quality of commonness that is satisfying and quieting as the vision of a little green radish-bed, what with an inner sympathy between Trowbridge and his characters and, above all, an inner sympathy with his readers, what with Truth itself and the sweet gift of portraying the sunshiny days as they are—why talk of Trowbridge?

Is it not all there written?

Can one not read and rest in it?

VIII

"GIVE ME THREE GRAINS OF CORN, MOTHER!"

"NO," SAID my friend Annabel Lee, "I can't really say that I care for Trowbridge. All that you have said is true enough, but he fails to interest me."

"What do you like in literature?" I asked, regarding her with interest, for I had never heard her say. It must need be something characteristic of herself.

"I like strength, and I like simplicity, and I like emotion, and I like vital things always. And I like poetry rather than prose. Just now," said Annabel Lee, "I am thinking of an old-fashioned bit of verse that to me is all that a poem need be. To have written it is to have done

enough in the way of writing, because it's real—like your Trowbridge."

"Oh, will you repeat it for me!" I said.

"It is called, 'Give Me Three Grains of Corn, Mother.' It is of a famine in Ireland a great many years ago—a lad and his mother starving."

And then she went on:

" 'Give me three grains of corn, mother,
Give me three grains of corn,
'Twill keep the little life I have
Till the coming of the morn.
I am dying of hunger and cold, mother,
Dying of hunger and cold,
And half the agony of such a death
My lips have never told.

" 'It has gnawed like a wolf at my heart, mother,
A wolf that is fierce for blood,
All the livelong day and the night, beside—
Gnawing for lack of food.

I dreamed of bread in my sleep, mother,
And the sight was heaven to see—
I awoke with an eager, famishing lip,
But you had no bread for me.

" 'How could I look to you, mother,
How could I look to you
For bread to give to your starving boy,
When you were starving, too?
For I read the famine in your cheek
And in your eye so wild,
And I felt it in your bony hand,
As you laid it on your child.

" 'The queen has lands and gold, mother,
The queen has lands and gold,
While you are forced to your empty breast
A skeleton babe to hold—
A babe that is dying of want, mother,
As I am dying now,
With a ghastly look in its sunken eye
And the famine upon its brow.

" 'What has poor Ireland done, mother,
What has poor Ireland done,
That the world looks on and sees us die,
Perishing one by one?
Do the men of England care not, mother,
The great men and the high,
For the suffering sons of Erin's isle,—
Whether they live or die?

" 'There's many a brave heart here, motner,
Dying of want and cold,
While only across the channel, mother,
Are many that roll in gold.
There are great and proud men there, mother,
With wondrous wealth to view,
And the bread they fling to their dogs to-night
Would bring life to me and you.

" 'Come nearer to my side, mother,
Come nearer to my side,
And hold me fondly, as you held
My father when he died.

Quick, for I can not see you, mother,
My breath is almost gone.
Mother, dear mother, ere I die,
Give me three grains of corn!'

"What do you think," said my friend Annabel Lee, "is it not full of power and poetry and pathos?"

"Yes, it could not in itself be better," I replied. "And it has the simplicity."

"And pretends nothing," said Annabel Lee.

"And who wrote it?" I asked.

"Oh, some forgotten Englishwoman," said Annabel Lee. "I believe her name was Edwards. She perhaps wrote a poem, now and then, and died."

"And are the poems forgotten, also?" I inquired.

"Yes, forgotten, except by a few. But when they remember them, they remember them long."

"Then which is better, to be remembered, and remembered shortly, by the multitudes; or to be forgot by the multitudes and remembered long by the one or two?"

"It is incomparably better to be remembered long by the one or two," said Annabel Lee. "To be forgotten by any one or anything that once remembered you is sorely bitter to the heart."

RELATIVE

"DO YOU think, Annabel Lee," I said to her on a day that I felt depressed, "that all things must really be relative, and that those which are not now properly relative will eventually become so, though it gives them acute anguish?"

The face of Annabel Lee was placid, and also the sea. The one glanced down upon me from the shelf, and the other spread away into the distance.

Were that face and that sea relative? Surely they could not be, since those two things in their very nature might go ungoverned. Do not universal laws, in extreme moments, give way?

"Relative!" said Annabel Lee. "Noth-

ing is relative. I tell you nothing is relative. I am come out of Japan. In Japan, when I was very new to everything, there was an ugly frog-eyed woman who washed me and anointed me and dressed me in silk, the while she pinched my little white arms cruelly, so that my little red mouth writhed with the pain. Also the frog-eyed woman looked into my suffering young eyes with her ugly frog-eyes so that my tiny young soul was prodded as with brad-nails. The frog-eyed woman did these things to hurt me—she hated me for being one of the very lovely creatures in Japan. She was a vile, ugly wretch.

"That was not relative. I tell you that was not relative," said Annabel Lee.

"If I had been an awkward, overgrown, bloodless animal and that frog-eyed woman had pinched my little white arms—

still *she* would have been a vile, ugly wretch.

"If I had been a vicious spirit and that frog-eyed woman had looked into my vicious eyes with her ugly frog-eyes—still *she* would have been a vile, ugly wretch.

"If I had been a hateful little thing, instead of a gently-bred, gently-living, pitiful-to-the-poor maiden, and that frog-eyed woman had hated me with all her frog-heart—still *she* would have been a vile, ugly wretch.

"If that frog-eyed woman had stood alone in Japan with no human being to compare her to — still the frog-eyed woman would have been a vile, ugly wretch.

"She has left her horrid frog-mark on my fair soul. Not anything beneath the worshiped sun can ever blot out the horrid frog-mark from my fair soul. A thou-

sand curses on the ugly, frog-eyed woman," said Annabel Lee, tranquilly.

"Then that, for one thing, is not relative," I said. "But perhaps that is because of the power and the depth of your eyes and your fair soul. Where there are no eyes and no fair souls—at least where the eyes and the fair souls can not be considered as themselves, but only as things without feeling for life—then are not things relative?"

"Nothing is relative," said Annabel Lee. "If your dog's splendid fur coat is full of fleas and you caress your dog with your hands, then presently you may acquire numbers of the fleas. You love the dog, but you do not love the fleas. You forgive the fleas for the love of the dog, though you hate them no less. So then that is not relative. If that were relative you would love the fleas a little for the same reason that you forgive them: for

love of your dog. Forgiveness is a negative quality and can have no bearing on your attitude toward the fleas."

Having said this, Annabel Lee gazed placidly over my head at the sea.

When her mood is thus tranquil, she talks graciously and evenly and positively, and is beautiful to look at.

My mind was now in much confusion upon the subject in question. But I felt that I must know all that Annabel Lee thought about it.

"What would you say, Annabel Lee," said I, "to a case like this: If a soul were at variance with everything that touches it, everything that makes life, so that it must struggle through the long nights and long days with bitterness, is not that because the soul has no sense of proportion, and has not made itself properly relative to each and everything that is?—relative, so that when one hard thing

touches it, simultaneously one soft thing will touch it; or when it mourns for dead days, simultaneously it rejoices for live ones; or when its best-loved gives it a deep wound, simultaneously its best enemy gives it vivid pleasure."

"Nothing is relative," again said Annabel Lee. "Nothing can be relative. Nothing need be relative. If a soul is wearing itself to small shreds by struggling days and nights, that is a matter relating peculiarly to the soul, and to nothing else, *nothing* else. If a soul is wearing itself to small shreds by struggling, the more fool it. It is struggling because of things that would never, *never* struggle because of it. In truth, not one of them would move itself one millionth of an inch because of so paltry a thing as a soul."

I looked at Annabel Lee, her hair, her hands and her eyes. As I looked, I was reminded of the word "eternity."

A human being is a quite wonderful thing, truly — and great — there's none greater.

Annabel Lee is a person who always says truth, for, for her, there is nothing else to say.

She has reached that marvelous point where a human being expects nothing.

"If the days of a life, Annabel Lee," I said, "are made bright because of two other lives that are dear to it, and if the life happens upon a day when the thought of the two whom it loves makes its own heart like lead, then what can there be to smooth away its weariness, in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth?"

"Foolish life," said my friend Annabel Lee. "There is no pain in Japan like what comes of loving some one or some thing. And if the some one or the some thing is the only thing the life can call its

own, then woe to it. The things it needs are three: a Lodging Place in heaven above; a Bit of Hardness in the earth beneath; a Last Resort in the waters under the earth. These three—but no life has ever had them."

"In the end," I said, "when all wide roadways come together, and all heavy hearts are alert to know what will happen, then will there not indeed be one grand adjustment, and life and all become at once magnificently relative?"

"Never; it can't be so. Nothing is relative," said Annabel Lee, on a day that I felt depressed.

MINNIE MADDERN FISKE

TO-DAY my friend Annabel Lee and I went to the theater and we saw a wonderful and fascinating woman with long dark-red hair upon the stage.

She is attractive, that red-haired woman —adorably attractive. And she reminds one of many things.

Annabel Lee was greatly interested in her acting, and was charmed with herself —and so was I.

"Do you suppose she finds life very delightful?" I said to my friend.

"I don't suppose," my friend replied, "she is of the sort that considers whether or not life is delightful. Probably her work is hard enough to keep her out of mischief of any kind."

Whereupon we both fell to thinking how fortunate are they whose work is hard enough to keep them out of mischief of any kind.

"But there must be," I said, "some months, perhaps in the summer, when she doesn't work. I have heard that some actors take houses among the mountains and do their own housework for recreation."

"I," said Annabel Lee, can not quite imagine this woman with the red hair making bread and scouring pans and kettles for pleasure. But very likely she sometimes goes into the country for vacations, and I can fancy her doing the various small enjoyable things that celebrities can afford to do—like wading barefooted in a narrow brooklet, or swinging high and recklessly in a barrel-stave hammock."

"And since she is so adorable on the

stage," I exclaimed, "how altogether enchanting she would be wading in the brooklet or swinging in the barrel-stave hammock—she with the long, red hair! Perhaps it would even be braided down her back in two long tails."

It is a picture that haunts me—Mrs. Fiske in the midst of her vacation doing the small enjoyable things.

"Of course," said my friend Annabel Lee, "we don't *know* that she doesn't spend her vacations in a fine, conventional, stupid yacht, or at some magnificent, insipid American or English country house. We can only give her the benefit of the doubt."

"Yes, the benefit of the doubt," I replied.

How fascinating she was, to be sure, with her personality merged in that of Mary Magdalene!

The Magdalene is no longer a shadowy

ideal with a somewhat buxom body, scantily draped, with indefinite hair and with the lifeless beauty that the old masters paint. Nor is she quite the woman of the scriptures who is presented to one's mind without that quality which is called local coloring, and with too much of the quality that is ever present with the women in the scriptures—a something between uncleanness and final complete redemption.

No, Mary Magdalene is Mrs. Fiske, a slight woman still in the last throes of youth, with two shoulders which move impatiently, expressing indescribable emotions of aliveness and two lips which perform their office — that of coloring, bewitching, torturing, perfuming, anointing the words that come out of them. Apart from these lips, Mary Magdalene's face has a wonderfully round and childish look, and her two round eyes at first sight

give one an idea of positive innocence. In the Magdalene's face—and in that of an actor of Mrs. Fiske's range—these are a beautifully delicate incongruity.

And my friend Annabel Lee has told me that the strongest things are the delicate incongruities—the strongest in all this wide world. Because they make you consider—and considering, you wait.

With such a pair of round, innocent eyes of some grayish color—who can blame Mary Magdalene?

In the latter acts of the play these eyes go one step farther than innocence: they do hunger and thirst after righteousness. And, ah, dear heaven (you thought to yourself), how well they did it! To hunger and thirst after righteousness—not herself, but her eyes. That was this Mary Magdalene's art.

This Mary Magdalene, though she is indeed in the last throes of youth—with-

out reference to the years she may know —has yet beneath her chin a very charming roundness of flesh which one day obviously will become a double chin. Just now it is enchanting. There are feminine children of seven and eight with round faces, who have just that fullness beneath the chin, and beneath the chin of Mary Magdalene—and added to her eyes—it carries on the idea of innocence and inexperience to a rare good degree. Any other woman actor would have long since massaged this fullness away. Forsooth, perhaps this is the one woman actor who could wear such a thing with beauty.

Mary Magdalene's hair in its deep redness is scornful and aggressive in the first acts of the play. In the latter acts it assumes a marvelous patheticness. And, if you like, there is a world of patheticness in red hair.

If Mary Magdalene's hair were of a different color—if the bronze shadows were yellow, or gray, or black, or brown shadows—her lips and her shoulders were in vain.

On the stage Mary Magdalene stands with her back to her audience—she stands, calm and placid, for three or four minutes before the rising and falling curtain, graciously permitting all to admire and feast their eyes upon the red of her hair.

"She knows," said my friend Annabel Lee, "that she can make her face bewitching—and she knows also that her hair is bewitching without being so made. And she chooses that the world at large shall know it, too."

She has will-power, has Mary Magdalene. It is her will, her strength, her concentration of all her power to herself that makes her thus bewitching—and

scorn and anguish were real it would strike inward—instead of outward toward the audience—and the audience would not know. If the red-haired woman's scorn and anguish were real, it would not seem real and would be very uninteresting. And that very likely is the reason why the scorn and anguish of other red-haired women—and of black-haired, and brown-haired, and yellow-haired, and gray-haired, and pale-haired women, who are not working on the stage—is so uninteresting and ineffectual. It is real, and they can not act it out, and so it doesn't seem real—and you don't have to pay money to see it done.

To make it seem real they must need go at it cold-bloodedly, and work it up, and charge you a round price for it.

Mary Magdalene isn't here to do this, but Mrs. Fiske takes her place and does it for her.

She does it exquisitely well.

Could Mary Magdalene herself—she of the Bible—be among those who sit watching, she would surely marvel and admire.

Meanwhile, for myself, I have two visions of this Mary Magdalene.

One—in one of the acts wherein her eyes do hunger and thirst after righteousness—when she sits before a small table and lifts her pathetic, sweet voice with the words, "When the dawn breaks, and the darkness shall flee away"; and then she stands and the red hair is equally pathetic and twofold bewitching, and she says again, "When the dawn breaks, and the darkness shall flee away." And the other vision is of her in the country in the midst of a summer day, under a summer sky, swinging high and recklessly in a barrel-stave hammock.

XI

LIKE A STONE WALL

MY FRIEND Annabel Lee has told me there are bitterer things in store for me than I have known yet.

Times I have wondered what they can be.

"When you have come to them," said my friend Annabel Lee," they will be so bitter and will fit so well into your life that you will wonder that you did not always know about them, and you will wonder why you did not always have them."

"The bitterest things I have known yet," I said, "have had to do with the varying friendship of one or another whom I have loved."

"Varying friendship?" said Annabel Lee. "But friendship does not vary."

"No, that is true," I rejoined. "I mean the varying deception I have had from some whom I have loved."

"In time," said my friend Annabel Lee, "you will love more, and your deceiving will be all at once, and bitterer. It will be a rich experience."

"Why rich?" I inquired.

"Because from it," said my friend Annabel Lee, "you will learn to not see too much, to not start out with faith, in fact, to take the goods that the gods provide and endeavor to be thankful for them. Your other experiences have been poverty-stricken in that respect. They leave you with rays of hope, without which you would be better off. They are poor and bitter. What is to come will be rich and bitterer. Their bitterness will prevent you from appreciating the richness of

them—until perhaps years have come and taken them from immediately before your eyes. As soon as they are where you can not see them, you can consider them and appreciate their richness."

"Whatever they may be," I made answer, "I do not think I shall ever be able to appreciate their richness."

"Then you will be very ungrateful," said my friend Annabel Lee.

I looked hard at her—and she looked back at me. There are times when my friend Annabel Lee is much like a stone wall.

"Yes," said my friend Annabel Lee, "if you ever feel to express proper gratitude for the good things of this life, be sure that you express your gratitude for the right thing. Very likely you will not have a great deal of gratitude, and you must not waste any of it—but what you do have will be of the most excellent

quality. For it will accumulate, and the accumulation will all go to quality. And the things for which you are to be grateful are the bitternesses you have known. If you have had it in mind ever to give way to bursts of gratitude for this air that comes from off the salt sea, for that line of pearls and violets that you see just above the horizon, for the health of your body, for the sleep that comes to you at the close of the day, for any of those things, then get rid of the idea at once. Those things are quite well, but they are not really given to you. They are merely placed where any one can reach them with little effort. The kind fates don't care whether you get them or not. Their responsibility ends when they leave them there. But the bitternesses they give to each person separately. They give you yours, Mary Mac Lane, for your very own. Don't say *they* never think of you."

"I've no intention of saying it," said I.

"You will find," said my friend Annabel Lee—without noticing my interruption, and with curious expressions in her voice and upon her two red lips—"you will find that these bitternesses come from time to time in your life, like so many milestones. They are useful as such—for of course you like to take measurements along the road, now and again, to see what progress you have made. Along some parts of the road you will find your progress wonderful. If you are appreciative and grateful, at the last milestone you have come to thus far you will express your measure of gratitude to the kind fates. That is, no—" said my friend Annabel Lee, "you will not do this *at* the milestone, but after you have passed it and have turned a corner, and so can not see it even when you look back."

"But why shall I express gratitude

there?" I inquired in a tone that must have been rather lifeless.

"Why?" repeated my friend Annabel Lee. "Because you will have grown in strength on account of these milestones; because you will have learned to take all things tranquilly. Why, after the very last milestone I daresay you would be able to sit with folded hands if a house were burning up about your ears!"

"Which must indeed be a triumph," said I.

"A triumph?—a victory!" said my friend Annabel Lee — with still more curious expressions. "And the victories are not what this world sees"—which reminded me of things I used to hear in Sunday-school ever so many years ago. "You remember the story of the Ten Virgins? Taking the story literally," said my friend Annabel Lee, "the lot of the five Foolish Virgins is much the more fortunate.

There was a rare measure of bitterness for them when they found themselves without oil for their lamps at a time when oil was needed. They gained infinitely more than they lost. As for the five Wise Virgins—well, *I* wouldn't have been one of them under *any* circumstances," said my friend Annabel Lee. "Fancy the miserable, mean, mindless, imagination-less, selfish natures that could remain unmoved by the simplicity of the appeal, 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.' It must now," said my friend Annabel Lee, "be a hundred times bitterer for them to think of being handed down in endless history as demons of selfishness—and they are now where they can not, presumably, measure their bitterness by milestones of progress."

"So then, yes," said my friend Annabel Lee—"whatever else you may do as you

go through life, remember to save up your gratitude for the bitternesses you have known—and remember that for *you* the bitterest is yet to come."

"Have *you*, Annabel Lee," I asked, "already known the bitterest that can come—and can *you* sit with your hands folded in the midst of a burning house?"

"Not I!" said my friend Annabel Lee, and laughed gayly.

Again I looked hard at her—and she looked back at me.

Certainly there are times when my friend Annabel Lee is like a stone wall.

XII

TO FALL IN LOVE

"I LOVED madly," said my friend Annabel Lee. "There came one down out of the north country that was dark and strong and brave and full of life's fire. All my short life had been bathed in summer. I had dreamed my thirteen years beneath cherry-blossoms upon a high hill.

"But at the coming of this man from the north country I opened my two sloe-eyes, and the world turned white—exquisite, rapturous, divine white.

"And afterward all was heavy gray.

"Away from the high hill of the cherry-blossoms there lay a stretch of red barren waste with towering rocks—and beyond that a quiet, quiet sea that was only blue.

"At the left of the high hill of the cherry-blossoms there was a mountain covered with green ivy—dark green ivy that defined its own green shape against the brilliant yellow sky behind it. Green and yellow, green and yellow, green and yellow, said the sky and the mountain covered with ivy.

"The high hill of the cherry-blossoms was colored with all the colors of Japan.

"I lived there with people—my mother and my father and some others—all with pale faces and sloe-eyes.

"But some of them were very ugly.

"Then came one down out of the north country that was dark and strong and brave and full of life's fire.

"He was ugly, but his face was perfect.

"Straightway I fell in love with this one. Of all things in Japan, what a thing it is to fall in love!

"Where the red barren waste lay spread

below me I saw manifold softnesses, like a dove's breast, like a fawn's eyes, like melted lilies, and the towering, gloomy rocks were the home of violet dreams.

"In the deep green of the ivy mountain my soul found rest at nightfall among mystery and shadow. It wandered there in marvelous peace. And the coolness and damp and the low muttering of the wind and the night birds went into it with a stirring, powerful influence. Also the voices out of the very long ago came from among the green, dark ivy, and from the crevices of gray stones beneath it, and they told me true things in the stillness.

"From the deepness of the brilliant yellow sky—the yellow of burnished brass —there came legion earth-old contradictions. And wondrous paradox and parallel that had not been among the cherry-blossoms appeared to me as my

mind contemplated these. I said, Am I thus in love because that I am weak, or that I am strong? For I see here that it is both weakness and strength. And I said, Am I myself when I do this thing? or was that I who lived among the cherry-blossoms? I said, Who am I? What am I?

"Below all there was the blue, broad sea. This sea gave out a white mist that rose and spread over the earth. I knew that I was in love, once and for all.

"The world was white. The world was beautiful. The world was divine.

"Life shone out of the mist unspeakable in its countless possibilities. Voices spoke near me and infinite voices called to me from afar—they sounded clear and faint and maddening-soft and tender, and the soul of me answered them with deafening, joyous silent music.

"He from the north country that was dark and strong and brave and full of

life's fire came, some days, to the high hill of the cherry-blossoms. He spoke often and of many things. He spoke to people —to my mother and to my father, and to others. And rarely he spoke to me. Rarely he looked at me. He had been in the great world. He knew wonderful women and wonderful men. He had been touched with all things.

"What a human being was he!

"And of all things in Japan, what a thing it is to fall in love!

"When three days had gone my heart knew rapture beyond any that it had dreamed. It knew the mysteries and the fullnesses.

"After three days the world turned to that divine white, and was white for seven days.

"And afterward all was heavy gray.

"The one from the north country returned back to the north country.

"Of all things in Japan, what a thing it is to fall in love!

"I was not in love with this one because he was a man, or because he was strange and fascinating—but because he was a glorious human being.

"My heart was not turned to this one to marry him. Marrying and giving in marriage are for such as are in love unconsciously.

"To see this one from the north country—to hear his voice—that was life and all for me—life and all.

"But he was gone.

"He left a silence and a weariness.

"These came and crowded out the white from my heart, and themselves found lodgment there.

"And all was heavy gray.

"The picture of life and the mystery and shadow that was revealed to me when the world was white has never

gone. It has filled me in the days of my youth with an old terror.

"Of all things in Japan, what a thing it is to fall in love!

"To fall in love!"—said my friend Annable Lee, the while her two eyes and her two white hands, in their expression, their position, told of a thing that is heart-breaking to see.

XIII

WHEN I WENT TO THE BUTTE HIGH SCHOOL

"THERE was a time," I said to my friend Annabel Lee, "when I went to the Butte High School. I think of it now with mingled feelings."

"You were younger then," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"I was younger, and in those days I still looked upon life as something which would one day open wide and display wondrous and beautiful things for me. And meanwhile I went every day to the Butte High School. I found it a very interesting place—much more interesting than I have since found the broad world. I was sixteen and seventeen and eighteen, and things were not brilliantly colored,

and so I made much with a vivid fancy of all that came in my path."

"And what do you, now that you are one-and-twenty?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"I sit quietly," I replied, "and wish not, and wait not—and look back upon the days in the Butte High School with mingled feelings."

"Also unawares," said my friend Annabel Lee, "you still think things relating to that which is one day to open wondrously for you. But, never mind," she added hastily, as I was about to say something, "tell me about the Butte High School."

"'Twas a place," said I, "where were gathered together manifold interesting phenomena, and where I studied Vergil, and grew fond of it, and was good in it; and where I studied geometry, and was fond of it, and knew less about it each day that I studied it;—and always I

studied closely the persons whom I met daily in the Butte High School. I recall very clearly each member of the class of ninety-nine. My memory conjures up for me some quaint and fantastic visions against picturesque backgrounds that appeal to my sense of delicate incongruity, especially so since viewed in this light and from this distance."

"What are some of them?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"There is one," said I, "of a girl whom always in my mind I called The Shad, for that she was so bland, and so flat, and so silent,—and she had a bad habit of asking me to write her Latin exercises, which perhaps was not so much like a shad as like a person; and there is one of a girl who spent the long hours of the day in writing long, long letters to her love, but knew painfully little about the lessons in the class-rooms; and there is one of a girl

who brought to school every day a small flask of whiskey to cheer her benighted hours,—she was daily called back and down by the French teacher on account of her excessively bad French, and life had looked dull for her were it not for the flask's pungent contents; there is one of a strange-looking, tawny-headed girl who sat across the narrow aisle from me in the assembly-room during my last year in school, who kept her desk neatly piled with the works (she called them works) of Albert Ross—and after she had read them, very kindly she would lean over and repeat the stories, with quotations verbatim, for my benefit;—her standing in her classes was not brilliant, but in Albert Ross she was thorough; there is one of a clever, pretty girl who was malicious—exquisitely malicious in all her ways and deeds, and seemingly no thought entered her head that was not

fraught with it,—she was malicious in algebra, malicious in literature, malicious in ancient history, malicious in physical culture, malicious in the writing of short themes—and when it so chanced that I made a failure in a recitation, or was stupid, she would look up at me and smile very sweetly and maliciously; and there is one of a girl whose quaint and voluble profanity haunts me still. And especially there is in my memory a picture of all these on our graduating day, receiving each a fine white diploma rolled up and neatly tied with the class colors—a picture of these and the others,—we were fifty-nine in all. And the diplomas stated tacitly, in heavily engrossed letters, that we had all been good for four years and had fulfilled every requirement of the Butte High School. So we had, doubtless—but how much some of us had done for which in our diplomas we were not

given credit! In truth, nothing was stated in them, in engrossed lettering, about courses in love-letters, or profanity, or malice, and Albert Ross was not in the curriculum.

"And the president of the school board doled out those diplomas, with a short, set speech for each, one wet June day—but he was not aware how insignificant they were.

"And my mind likewise conjures up a vision of two with whom I used to take what we called tramps, during our last year in the High School—far down and out of Butte, on Saturdays and other days when school was not. I remember those two and those tramps exceeding well—nor can I think with but four years gone that the two themselves have forgotten. One of these was an individual whose like I have not since known. She reminded me sometimes of Cleopatra and

sometimes of Peg of Limmavaddy. She was of Irish ancestry and had a long black mane of hair braided down behind, and two conscious and lurid eyes of the kind that is known as Irish blue. She had brains enough within her head, but did not study overmuch. Her ways of going through life were often very dubious. She weighed a great many pounds. Her experience of the world was large, and to me she was fascinating. For herself, she was always rather afraid of me—so much afraid, in truth, that if I said a funny thing she must need laugh—with a forced and fictitious merriment; if I told her she had no soul, she must need agree with me abjectly, though she was a good Catholic; if I frowned upon her, she shivered and was silent. Fanciful names and frocks (though this lady's frocks were always fanciful in ways) were selected for these tramping expeditions. This one's

fanciful name was called Muddled Maud. For no particular reason, I believe—but she wore it well. The other member of our trio was of a less extraordinary type. She was stout as to figure, and she knew a great deal about some things. She was very good in history, and at home she could make pie and cake and bread. It is true that her cake sometimes stuck, and sometimes sank in the middle, and when she carved a fowl she could not always hit the joints. And she was one of the kind that always pronounces picture, "pitcher." She was also known as a very sensible girl. I can see her now with a purple ribbon around her neck and a brown rain-coat on coming into the High School on a wet morning. When we went tramping she usually wore an immense gray-white, mother-hubbard gown, belted in at the waist, and a wide flat hat, which made her look rather like

a toad-stool. Her fanciful name was Emancipated Eva. Emancipated, in truth, she was. In the High School she was dignified and sedate, but on our tramps she would frequently skip like a young lamb, and frisk and gambol down there in the country.

"She who was called Muddled Maud likewise frisked and gamboled—and always she personified my idea of the French noun *abandon.*

"Also I frisked and gamboled in those days far down in the country.

"The fanciful name selected for me was Refreshment Rosanna—and I can not tell why. But it was thought a good name for a lady tramp. We started on these tramps at six in the morning. We would rise from our beds at five, and at ten minutes before six I would meet Muddled Maud at the corner of Washington and Quartz streets, below her house. To-

gether we would go down east Park street to the home of Emancipated Eva. Then we walked seven miles or eight away into the open and the wild.

"We took things along to eat—sometimes a great many things and sometimes a few. Times Muddled Maud would have but a curious-looking jelly-roll, and Emancipated Eva would come laden with hard bits of beef, and I could show but a plate of fudge. But other times there were tarts and meat-pies and turnovers, and deviled ham and deviled chicken and deviled veal and deviled tongue and deviled fish of divers kinds, and some bottles of nut-brown October ale, and sardines *a l'huile*, and green, green olives. Only the more there was, the harder to carry. But, times, Muddled Maud would carry much with little effort—she would adorn herself with the luncheon—a long bit of sausage-link about her neck like a

chain, and upon her hat, held securely with bonnet-pins, fat yellow lemons, and two bananas crossed in front like the tiny guns on a soldier's hat, and bunches of Catawba grapes scattered here and there, and pears hanging by their little stems behind.

"The too early morning prevented all from being seen by the inhabitants of Butte, and we did not venture home again until came the friendly darkness.

"Those were fascinating expeditions—and whose was the glory? Mine was the glory. 'Twas I who invented them. 'Twas I who knew there was none so fitted for a so delicate absurdity as she we called Muddled Maud; and after her, none so fitted as the fair, the good-natured, the Emancipated; and together with them both, I. And I led them forth, and I led them back, and I said things should be thus and so, and straightway

they were thus and so. And we enjoyed it, and clear air was in our lungs and life was in our veins, for we had each but eighteen years and were full of youth. But most of all 'twas fascinating because we were three of three widely differing manners of living and methods of reasoning. For I was not like Emancipated Eva, nor yet like Muddled Maud; and Emancipated Eva was not like me, nor yet like Muddled Maud; and Muddled Maud was not like Emancipated Eva, nor yet like me.

"To be sure, there were some things in my ordering which neither the one nor the other found enchanting. Why should the Mac Lane do all the ordering? they murmured between themselves, but they dared not openly revolt, so all went well.

"But now these are gone.

"The three of us were graduated from the Butte High School with the fifty-nine

others of ninety-nine, and had each a fine white diploma, and went our ways.

"She who was like Cleopatra and Peg of Limmavaddy is teaching a school, according to the last that I heard, in the north of Montana; and she that was Emancipated Eva has long since gone to California, and is married, and keeps a house; and for me—I am here, far off from Butte, with you, Annabel Lee, some things having been done meanwhile.

"But though the two are gone, I warrant they have not forgotten. They have not forgotten the Butte High School, nor the class of ninety-nine, nor the tramps we went, nor their tyrant, me.

"And I daresay they all remember their Butte High School—she of the love-letters, she of the whiskey-flask, she the student of Albert Ross, she of the profanity, she of the malice, The Shad,—and all the nine-and-fifty, the young feminine

persons and the young masculine persons. Some are married, and some are flown, and some of them are grown up and different, 'and some of them in the churchyard lie, and some are gone to sea.'

"But whenever I've a fancy to shut my eyes and look back, I can see them all, a quaint company.

"Also, whenever I've a fancy to shut my eyes and look back to life when it was unspeakably brilliant in possibilities to look forward to, and was marked in parti-colored checks and rings, it fetches me to the days when I went to the Butte High School and studied geometry and Vergil. Only I'm glad I'm not there now."

"What for?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"It is rather pitiful and dreadful to think of having been seventeen, and to have gone every day to the Butte High

School and imagined how wonderful-beautiful life would be some day," said I, and all at once felt very weary.

XIV

"AND MARY MAC LANE AND ME"

THERE are times in a number of days when my friend Annabel Lee and I enjoy a cigarette together. My friend Annabel Lee, with her cigarette, her petite much-colored form wrapped round in clouds of thin, exquisite gray, is more than all suggestive and inscrutable. She leans her two elbows on something and looks out at me.

I with my cigarette am nothing but I with my cigarette. I enjoy it, but am not beautiful with it, nor fascinating.

But my friend Annabel Lee is all that my imagination can take in. Under the influence of the thin, exquisite gray she grows fanciful, and subtly and indefinitely

she meets me somewhere, and extends me her hand for a moment.

"Don't you know," said my friend Annabel Lee, with her cigarette, "that old song that goes:

'Mary Seaton,
And Mary Beaton,
And Mary Carmichael,
And me'?

I think it is Mary Stuart of Scotland who says that. And a fair good song it is. But just now, for *me*, if I were Mary Stuart of Scotland, you poor miserable little rat, I should say:

'Mary Mac Lane,
And Mary Mac Lane,
And Mary Mac Lane,
And me.'

For aren't we two together here, calmly smoking — and doesn't the world spin round?"

I was enchanted. How few are the times when my friend Annabel Lee is like this, warm and friendly and lightly contemptuous and inclined to grotesquerie.

'Tis so that she becomes human and someway near to me.

"Yes, I should say Mary Mac Lane, and Mary Mac Lane, and Mary Mac Lane, and me," said my friend Annabel Lee from her gently-puffed clouds. "There are times when you are soft and satisfying as a gray pussy-cat. If I stroke you, you will purr. If I give you cream, you will lap it up. And then you will curl up warmly in my lap and sleep and purr and open and shut your little fur paws.

'I will sit by the fire
And give her some food,
And pussy will love me
Because I am good.'

What literature is more literature than Mother Goose?" said my friend Annabel Lee. "And will you love me—because I am good? Has it occurred to you that you must love what is good and because it is good, you poor, miserable, little rat,—and that you must hate what is evil? Look at me, look at me!—am I good?"

I looked at her. Certainly she was good. Just then she had a look of angels.

"Do you love me?" said my friend Annabel Lee, with her cigarette.

"Oh, yes," said I.

"Look at me again—am I evil?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"I presume you are," I replied, for then she looked vindictive and vicious.

"And do you hate me?"

"No," said I.

"Then you are very bad and wicked yourself, you poor, miserable, little rat," said my friend Annabel Lee, with her

cigarette, "and the world and all good people will condemn you."

"I fear," said I, with my cigarette, "that the world and all good people already do that."

"Ah, do they!" said my friend Annabel Lee. "Never mind—I will take care of you, you poor, miserable, little rat; I will make all soft for you; I will keep out the cold; I will color the dullness; I will fight off the mob."

"And I," I replied, "if for that reason you do so, will thank the world and all good people for condemning me."

"That was neatly said," said my friend Annabel Lee. "But let me tell you, when the world grows soft, I will grow hard—hard as nails."

"Then let the world stay hard," I said —"hard and bitter as wormwood, if it will, so that you come indeed thus friendly to me through these gray clouds."

"That, too, was very neat," said my friend Annabel Lee; "but mostly it goes to show that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. What literature is more literature than the proverbs? What is a bird in the hand worth?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Two in the bush," said I.

"Where does charity begin?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"At home," said I.

"What does it cover?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A multitude of sins," said I.

"What's a miss as good as?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A mile," said I.

"What makes the mare go?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Money," said I.

"Whom does conscience make cowards of?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Us all," said I.

"What does a stitch in time save?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Nine," said I.

"When are a fool and his money parted?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Soon," said I.

"What do too many cooks spoil?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"The broth," said I.

"What's an idle brain?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"The devil's workshop," said I.

"What may a cat look at?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A king," said I.

"What's truth stranger than?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Fiction," said I.

"What's there many a slip betwixt?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"The cup and the lip." said I.

"How do birds of a feather flock?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Together," said I.

"What do fools do where angels fear to tread?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Rush in," said I.

"What does many a mickle make?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A muckle," said I.

"What will the pounds do if you take care of the pence?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Take care of themselves," said I.

"What do curses do, like chickens?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Come home to roost," said I.

"What is it that has no turning?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A long lane," said I.

"What does an ill wind blow?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Nobody good," said I.

"What's a merciful man merciful to?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"His beast," said I.

"What's better to do than to break?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Bend," said I.

"What's an ounce of prevention worth?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"A pound of cure," said I.

"What's there nothing half so sweet in life as?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Love's young dream," said I.

"What does absence make?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"The heart grow fonder," said I.

"How would a rose by any other name smell?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"As sweet," said I.

"How did the Assyrian come down?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Like a wolf on the fold," said I.

"What were his cohorts gleaming with?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Purple and gold," said I.

"What was the sheen of their spears like?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Stars on the sea," said I.

"When?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee," said I.

"All of which proves," said my friend Annabel Lee, "that I've but to fiddle and you will dance, you poor, miserable, little rat. And my thought is, what is it better to be than second in Rome?"

"First in a little Iberian village," said I.

"But I'm not sure whether it is or not," said my friend Annabel Lee. "Some day you and I will go out into the great, broad world. Then we shall see who will be first and who will be second. The great, broad world is the best place of all wherein to find ourselves. And no matter

how we were situated before, we shall certainly be situated differently in the great broad world. In the great broad world there will be apples—apples enough for you and for me. But, who knows? you poor miserable little rat; it may be that your lot will be *all* the sweet, juicy apples, whilst I shall be given the cores. In the great broad world there will be ripe-red-raspberry shortcake—enough for you and for me. But, who knows? you poor miserable little rat; it may be that your lot will be all the ripe red raspberries, whilst I shall be given the crusts. In the great broad world there will be cigarettes—cigarettes enough for you and for me. But, who knows? You poor miserable little rat; it may be that your lot will be *all* the fine Egyptian tobacco and rice paper and clouds and clouds and clouds of pearl gray, soft pearl gray, to wrap you round, whilst I shall go looking

in empty boxes all day long, and never a cigarette. In which case mine will be by far the better lot in the end," said my friend Annabel Lee, "according to the law of compensation."

"Oh, dear!" said my friend Annabel Lee, petulantly; "why do you sit there stupidly staring? Talk and amuse me, why don't you? Make me feel sweet and content."

"If I were but that myself, Annabel Lee," said I. "I can not talk interestingly, but if you like I will ask you the proverbs and you may answer them. That amused me much—and it gave me a wonderful feeling of satisfaction, quite as if I were seven years old and knew my lesson perfectly."

"You ask and I answer?" said my friend Annabel Lee. "Very good. But I don't know my lesson perfectly. Begin."

"What's a bird in the hand worth?" said I.

"A pound of cure," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What does a stitch in time save?" said I.

"Two in the bush," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Where does charity begin?" said I.

"Betwixt the cup and the lip," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What may a cat look at?" said I.

"The broth," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What does many a mickle make?" said I.

"A multitude of sins," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What do too many cooks spoil?" said I.

"Us all," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Whom does conscience make cowards of?" said I.

"Dead men and fools," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What is it that has no turning?" said I.

"A full stomach," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What fortifies a stout heart?" said I.

"A stitch in time," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What does money make?" said I.

"An ill wind," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What will the pounds do if you take care of the pence?" said I.

"Come home to roost," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Where is there many a slip?" said I.

"Where angels fear to tread," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's sharper than a serpent's tooth?" said I.

"The pen," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's mightier than the sword?" said I.

"A rich man," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What makes the mare go?" said I.

"A fool and his money," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What should they do who live in glass houses?" said I.

"Draw down the blinds," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's a man's castle?" said I.

"The devil's workshop," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's better to do than to break?" said I.

"Rob Peter," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's the wind tempered to?" said I.

"The camel's back," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What do many hands make?" said I.

"A shorn lamb," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What can't you make out of a pig's ear?" said I.

"A gift-horse," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What should you never look in the mouth?" said I.

"A silk purse," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"What's half a loaf better than?" said I.

"Chickens before they are hatched," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"But let's not play this any more," said my friend Annabel Lee. "I'm languid and weary. Can't you talk to me—and talk so that I may feel rested and comfortable? And don't stare!"

"I fear I can't amuse you. I am sorry," said I. "You may envy me, Annabel Lee. You have not Annabel Lee to took at. Would not life look rich and full to

you if you could see before you your own vague, purple eyes, and your red, red lips, and those hands of power and romance —you, with your scarlet gown and the gold marguerites coming near and fading away in mist?"

"No, not particularly," said my friend Annabel Lee. "I rather like *your* looks," she added, and her purple eyes became less vague—"sitting there in your small black frock; and you puff at that tobacco much like a toy engine. Come, you amuse me — you please me. Come near me."

She held out one of her hands and the purple eyes changed suddenly into something that was rarely and indescribably friendly.

I felt much from life.

My friend Annabel Lee rested the hand she had held out upon my shoulder.

"When we go into the great, broad

world, Mary MacLane," she said, "and you have all the apples, and all the ripe-red-raspberry shortcake, and all the cigarettes, then perhaps will you *share* them with me?"

I said I would.

XV

A STORY OF SPOON-BILLS

WHEN the mood takes my friend Annabel Lee she will, if I beg her, tell me quaint and fantastic stories, such as are hidden away in the dusty crevices of this world. These tales have lain away there for centuries, and spiders have spun webs over and about them, so that when, perchance, they are brought out, bits of fine gray fiber are to be found among the lines.

Yesterday a pretty, plain story by my friend Annabel Lee that runs through my mind.

"Long ago," said my friend Annabel Lee, "there lived in Egypt a family of well-born but poorly-bred Spoon-bills in a green marsh by the side of the great

green river Nile. This family numbered five, and they were united and dwelling in peace. There were the father and mother and two daughters and a son. And there had been another son, but he was dead. And their names were Maren Spoon-bill, the mother; and Oliver W. Spoon-bill; the father; and Lilith Spoon-bill, the elder daughter; and Delilah Spoon-bill, the younger daughter. And the son's name was Le Page Spoon-bill.

"The son who had died was named Roland Spoon-bill. He was buried at the edge of the marsh, and his name and the date were carved upon a square, black, wooden tablet to his memory at the head of the grave. There was also this legend upon the tablet: 'Age 15. Gone in the hey-day of youth to his last rest. But his virtues are with us still.'

"And little Delilah Spoon-bill, who was an elementary, fanciful child of nine, used

to stand staring at this legend and wondering about it. A weeping willow hung low over the grave, and Delilah would stand near it picking gnats from its branches with her bill, and speculating about the legend. She wondered for one thing what 'hey-day' meant. Was it anything like a birth-day? Or was it, on the contrary, a day when everything went wrong and ended by a person's being shut into a dark bed-room? Or was it, perhaps, a picnic day—with tarts made of red jam? In that case Delilah felt very sorry for her brother that he should have died on such a day, for if there is an article of diet that spoon-bills really like it is tarts of red jam—made the way Canadians make them.

"But she never could decide.

"And another thing about the epitaph that puzzled her was the concluding clause—'but his virtues are with us still.'

What could virtues be? she asked herself. Were they anything like feathers, or were they good to eat, or were they something she had never seen and knew nothing about? But the letters said plainly, 'his virtues are with us still.' Truly, if they were among the family possessions, why had she not seen them? For anything that belonged to any of the Spoon-bill family that was at all out of the ordinary was always placed in an oak cabinet with glass doors that stood in a corner of the hall in their marsh home. Delilah had often looked in this cabinet to see if the virtues of her brother were not there. There were dried snake skins, and curious white stones, and Spanish moss, and devil's snuff-boxes—but no, there were no virtues. Of that she was convinced. She appealed to her older sister. 'Lilith,' said Delilah, 'what *are* virtues, and where do we keep Roland's? Don't you know,

on the tombstone it says, "his virtues are with us still." '

" 'Aren't you a silly!' said Lilith, laughing in Spoon-billish derision. Lilith was twelve, and one knows vastly more at twelve than at nine. 'Virtues aren't anything. And as for Roland's—that doesn't mean that he left them with us, any more than that he took them with him.'

" 'Then what *does* it mean?' said Delilah. 'I've thought so much about it.'

" 'You'll have to think some more,' said Lilith—'a good deal more, I should say —of *your* kind of thinking!'

"Delilah did not often appeal to her sister in these matters. She did not enjoy Lilith's habit of laughing. In truth, she didn't enjoy being laughed at at all—not the least in the world. She was like a great many other people.

"And so was Lilith.

"But oh, there were many things that Delilah wished to know!

"The Spoon-bill family was, as I have said, well born but poorly bred. Maren Spoon-bill and Oliver W. Spoon-bill both came of very good stock, but they had been the black sheep of their families and had forgotten the traditions and customs of their race. 'They had left no more pride,' Maren Spoon-bill's mother once said, 'than a sand-hill crane—no, nor a duck.'

"'No, nor a duck,' echoed Maren Spoon-bill and her husband, and gloried in it.

"And the children ran wild.

"But the children, though they ran wild, were not without ambition. On summer evenings, when the family took tea on the back porch and it was too warm for the children to run about much, they used to sit and tell their ambitions.

" 'I'm going to be an actress when *I* get big,' declared Lilith. 'I'm going to have a splendid career on the stage, and I shall earn heaps of money. And I shall have magnificent clothes, and every one will look at me and say, "*Isn't* she in stunning form to-night!" '

"And Le Page and Delilah were so overcome by the vision thus presented of their sister that they could but stare, awed and silent.

"And Delilah wondered how it must seem to be so very clever.

"But Le Page, who was eleven years old himself, soon rallied.

" 'Well, then,' said he, 'when *I* get big I'm going to be a pirate. I'll lay over all the pirates that ever were, a-firing and a-pillaging — and I'll wear magnificent clothes, and everyone will look at me and say, "*Isn't* he in stunning form to-night!" '

"Delilah thought this latter sounded strangely like Lilith — but perhaps in some subtle way a pirate was like an actress, and so must need be described in the same terms.

" 'And Delilah,' said her father, 'what shall you be—what kind of clothes are you going to wear?'

"Delilah had before tried the experiment of relating her ambition to the assembled family, and the result had been bad. The high laughter of Lilith and Le Page always rose on the still evening air, and even her father, who was a kind person, would smile. Delilah's ambition was always the same, but she nearly always varied it a little at each telling—and the amusement evinced by her sister and brother varied accordingly.

"Sometimes they even flapped their wings.

"Which was too cruel.

"Forsooth, children are always cruel.

"But while Delilah's ambition was always the same, those of Lilith and LePage covered an exceeding wide range. Some evenings Lilith would draw a glowing picture of herself as a lecturer of renown with a wonderful personal magnetism and a telling style—she would move the multitudes and draw tears from stony eyes by lifting up her voice. Whereupon Le Page, when he had recovered his breath, would portray himself as a celebrated scientist delving in marvelous chemical mysteries and discovering things of untold benefit to the race. He also would move the multitudes and draw tears from stony eyes.

"And Delilah would wonder what were lecturers and scientists, and how they could do these things.

"And when Lilith would announce her intention of becoming a famous sculptor whose work in the passionate would be

the delight of her day, then Le Page would turn his mind to the idea of becoming a noted explorer who would penetrate into Darkest Africa and Farthest North, and whose work in the passionate would be the delight of his day.

"And Delilah would marvel still more.

"Forsooth, children are always like that —and fascinating they are.

"And each summer evening after Lilith and Le Page had related their ambitions, their father would ask Delilah what was hers. Then always Delilah would whisper; 'I'm going to study tombstones, papa! And when I get big perhaps I shall know what every single tombstone in the world means. And perhaps after I've studied a long time and hard I can read Roland's right off and know what it means without thinking. And perhaps I can explain them all to people who don't know about them.'

"Which to Delilah was a daring ambition indeed—quite hitching her wagon to a star.

"Well, then," said my friend Annabel Lee, "this was when the Spoon-bill family was in its youngness.

"The years followed one after another, and the three children grew. And it came about that Lilith was three-and-twenty, and Le Page was two-and-twenty, and Delilah was twenty.

"They were much as they had been when they were children. Lilith, I may say in passing, was not an actress, nor a lecturer, nor yet a sculptor—and Le Page was merely Le Page.

"Also Delilah was Delilah, but had ceased to be elementary in some ways, while in others she was still, and so would be until the finish.

"It so happened that a young spoon-bill of masculine persuasion, from the other

side of the great green river Nile, fell in love with Delilah.

"Likewise Delilah fell in love with a young spoon-bill, but not that young spoon-bill.

"It happens frequently so.

"And Delilah did not fancy the spoon-bill from the other side of the river, and the spoon-bill with whom Delilah was in love did not fancy her in just that way.

"Which also happens frequently.

"On a day when the river Nile was very green, and heavy sickening-sweet flowers of dead white color hung from black trees on the banks, and the sky was, oh, so blue, and all was summer, the young spoon-bill from over the river would come to see Delilah. He loved so well—so hopelessly—that young spoon-bill! But Delilah on such a day would walk where the green water was shallow, and her thoughts would be with the

young spoon-bill who had gone to her heart.

"And the young spoon-bill from over the river would come and stand a little way from Delilah under a tree with broad thick leaves. How fine was he to look upon, with his white feathers glistening like silver and his eyes of topaz!

"And Delilah was most adorable with feathers of soft, soft gray—a so soft gray that one, if one were human, would wish to rest one's forehead upon the fluffy down of her breast.

"Then he from over the river—his name was Gerald Spoon-bill—would say: 'Delilah, come with me over the river to the damp meadows, where there is a pool with a thousand pond-lilies, and fair blooms the way. We should be happy there, you and I.'

"But Delilah would say: 'Oh, go back over the river, Gerald Spoon-bill! You and

I never should be happy together. Why do you stand there by the rubber-tree day after day? And why do you waste your life-nerves and your heart-nerves? Why are you not giving your good heart to some one who can take it?'

"'But you would be happy with me, Delilah,' he under the dark leaves would answer her eagerly. 'We will stand in the midst of a new day and watch the sun come up out of the sand—we will stand in pale shallows at midday—we will feel our hearts beat high when the lightnings come down through branches—we will fly a little in high winds—we will stand still and silent in the midst of golden solitudes when the sun is going off the sand—and in all these things my heart will be yours.'

"'Go back over the river, Gerald Spoon-bill!' said Delilah.

"But Gerald Spoon-bill felt that he

loved so well that he could not go back over the river.

" 'Tis not possible to go back over the river when one's best-loved is standing by herself in green shallows.

"Then along the bank from the direction of the date palms came Auden Spoon-bill, he who had gone to Delilah's heart. Likewise he was good to see—not from the handsomeness of his feathers or his eyes, but from the strength of his physical being. Though, too, his eyes were of amethyst.

"Auden Spoon-bill went along parallel to the shore of the river until he saw Delilah standing in the pale green water. Then he crossed over and came toward her.

" 'There are lotus flowers blooming down below where the steep cataract breaks over stones,' said he. 'Delilah, will you come with me to eat some?'

"'Oh, yes, I will come,' said Delilah, eagerly.

"For she still was elementary enough to say things eagerly.

"So they went down to where the lotus-flowers grew, where the steep cataract broke over stones.

"It so happened that it was almost the time when the great green river Nile flows out over its banks and makes all wet with water for miles around. At such a time it was the custom of Spoon-bills and cranes and adjutant-birds and others of their ilk, and animals of divers kinds, to leave their homes and move away out of reach of the green and purple flood. But no one had thought of moving yet, for it was too early in the season. Maren Spoon-bill and Oliver W. Spoon-bill had not even begun to gather up their household goods, nor had they, as their wont was, removed the black

tablet from the head of Roland Spoon-bill's grave, which was on the very edge of the river.

"The river-god is a person of whims like the rest of us. And so that year, on the day that Delilah and Auden Spoon-bill went down the river to eat lotus flowers, he gave vent to one of them. He thought to send a premonition of the yearly flood in the shape of one beautiful green and purple and white wave, one which would not go so very far but which should be damaging in its effects.

" 'Delilah,' said Auden Spoon-bill, 'since we are here eating lotus flowers, life is very fine, isn't it?'

" 'Oh, very fine—yes, very fine,' said Delilah, and was thrilled.

" 'You are a so dear friend,' said Auden Spoon-bill.

" 'Yes,' said Delilah, and was not thrilled.

"'Life,' said Auden Spoon-bill, 'is pretty fine, no matter how it is arranged.'

"'But life is a very strange thing,' said Delilah. 'I can't begin to tell you how strange I have found it. For one thing, I may have what is not my heart's desire, and what is my heart's desire I may not have.'

"'It is strange,' admitted Auden Spoon-bill. 'But why have any heart's desires aside from what is already yours in this fine, fair world?'

"'One can not rule one's heart,' cried Delilah. 'One's heart goes on before one's mind can stop to think. One's heart rushes in before everything. One's heart plays with brilliant-colored things when all else is dead-color. One's heart loves——'

"But Delilah never finished. Before their eyes rose up a magnificent wall—a wall of water that was fire and cloud and silver, and in it were ineffable rainbows

of the purple that gathers up the soul in its brilliance and shows it wondrous possibilities; and in it were lines of the pale lavender that caresses the senses—and one breathes from it almost a fragrance of heliotrope; and in it were broad sheets of deep black and dazzling white that were of the seeming of life and death; and in it, last of all, was a world of infinite green: it had come from a place of great things; it had come to a place where all went down before it, where lives exulted but shrank from it because of its green.

"An exquisite whim, was that of the river-god.

"Delilah and Auden Spoon-bill gazed for a brief moment. They saw the magnificent things. They saw death in the brilliancies, but nevertheless their spirits rose high. They saw also a wild flight of live things before the wave. Delilah

XVI

A MEASURE OF SORROW

"BUT though you are equally as beautiful as Poe's Annabel Lee," I said to my friend Annabel Lee—"and half the time I think you are the same one—still when I read over the poem in my mind I find differences."

"You find differences," said my friend Annabel Lee.

I repeated:

" 'It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee.
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.'

The first four lines," said I, "do very well, for it doesn't matter how long ago you lived—and who can tell? But—I fancy you live with other thoughts than that mentioned."

"I fancy I do," said my friend Annabel Lee.

I repeated:

" 'I was a child, and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
And we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee—
A love that the wingèd seraphs in heaven
Coveted her and me.'

The first line might stand," said I, "for you are only fourteen, and I but one-and-twenty—which is quite young youth when compared to the age of the earth. But the third and fourth lines are appalling. And, alas, you are not my Annabel Lee.

Always you make me feel, indeed, that nothing is mine. And no, surely the winged seraphs in heaven do not envy you and me for anything."

"If they do," said my friend Annabel Lee, "then heaven must needs be very poorly furnished."

I repeated:

" 'And this was the reason that long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee,
So that her high-born kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
In this kingdom by the sea.'

I imagine, times," said I, "that a chill wind has sometime come out of a cloud by night and gone over you. No high-born kinsman comes to carry you away—but I shiver at the possibility. Will a high-

born kinsman come to carry you away—shall you be shut into a gray stone sepulcher?"

"No kinsman, high- or low-born, is coming to carry me away," said my friend Annabel Lee. "Kinsmen do not carry away things that have no intrinsic value."

"No, I believe they don't," said I, and felt relieved.

I repeated:

" 'The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me,
Yes! that was the reason, (as all men know
In this kingdom by the sea,)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.'

But no," said I; "the angels in heaven are surely more than half so happy as you and I."

"More than half," said my friend Anna-

bel Lee. "They need not send clouds from heaven on that account."

I repeated:

" 'But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.'

If you loved anything," said I, " 'twould be stronger by far than that of some who are older, and of very many who may be wiser."

"I don't think wisdom and age have to do with it," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"And the angels in heaven would count for very little in it," said I.

"No, certainly not the angels in heaven," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Nor the demons down under the sea?" I asked.

"I don't know about *them*," said my friend Annabel Lee.

I repeated:

" 'For the moon never beams, without bringing
me dreams
Of the beatiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright
eyes
Of the beautiul Annabel Lee;
And so all the night-tide, I lie down by the
side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my
bride
In her sepulcher there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.'

The first lines," said I, "are well-fitting. For you are like to the moon and stars, and they are like to you. You are with them in the shadow-way. And if you

were out by the sea in a gray stone sepulcher I should stay there near you, in the night-tide and the day-tide. You would be there—and my heart would set in your direction still."

"More than it had set before," said my friend Annabel Lee. "For everything escheats to the sea at last. Those persons," said my friend Annabel Lee, "who have measures of sorrow which can be joined with the sea are the most fortunate persons of all. Those measures of sorrow will serve them well and will stand them in good stead on days when all other things desert them. If a measure of sorrow is joined with the sea it belongs to the sea—and the sea is always there.

"The sea," said my friend Annabel Lee, "is like a letter from some one whom you have written to after a long silence, who you thought might be dead.

"The sea is the measure of sorrow, and

the measure of sorrow is the sea. Having once had a measure of sorrow joined with the sea, your measure of sorrow will never be separated from the sea.

"The measure of sorrow will sink all of its woe deep into the sea, and the sea will be of the same color with it. For a measure of sorrow is sufficient to color a great sea.

"The sea will give to the measure of sorrow a bit of wild joy. There is no joy in the world like that of the sea—for there is enough in it to come out and touch all things in life, and life itself. And the wild joy will stop short only of a scene of death. If a life is joined with the sea, in spite of all the weariness, all the anguish, all the heavy-days of unrest, and all the futile struggling and wasting of nerves, there will yet be a wild joy in it all, and thrill after thrill of triumph in extreme moments.

"Those measures of sorrow that are not joined with the sea must do for themselves.

"And for these reasons, those persons who have measures of sorrow that can be joined with the sea are the most fortunate persons of all."

XVII

A LUTE WITH NO STRINGS

THE most astonishing thing about my friend Annabel Lee is that, young as she is, she seems except for some thing in the past to be absolutely in the present. She does not build up for herself things in the future. The future is a thing she looks upon with contempt. She has not a use for it—except perhaps to help form a bitter sentence of words.

The present she finds before her, and she lifts it up and places it upon a table before her and opens it as if it were a book—a book with but two pages. She seems to find symbols and figures and faint suggestions upon these two pages from which she derives a multitude of

ideas and fancies and material to make bitter sentences of words.

It seems to interest her, and it interests me to rare degrees.

She dwells upon the present.

She talks of things in the present with inflections of voice that are in sharp contrast to the sentiments she utters. The while the expression of her face is inscrutable. Taken by and large, she is an inscrutable person. I wonder while I listen, does she herself believe these things?—or is she talking to amuse herself? But perforce I feel a vein of truth in each thing that she says. I look hard at her to discover signs of irony or insincerity—but I can but feel a vein of rancorous truth, or a vein of friendly truth, or a vein of ancient truth, or curious.

Then, as she is talking and in the same moment I am wondering, I consider: What matters it whether or not any of it

is true, or whether or not she believes it, or whether or not I can understand it—since *she* is saying it. Is she not an exquisite person telling me these things in her exquisite voice?

She carries all before her in the world.

For she and I make up a small world.

If she be not brilliant in her talking, then that is because that set of sentences would be ruined by brilliancy.

If she be not profound in her discoursing, then that is because her fancy at the time dwells in the light fantastic and would be ruined by profoundness.

If she be not logical, that is because she is exquisite, which is quite beyond logic.

Nevertheless, when she says what is simple and plain and stupid the look of her face is more than all the look of one saying brilliant things.

And when she touches lightly upon

one thin fancy and another the look of her lily face is above all things profound.

And when her mood and its expression are most reckless of logic the look of her face is the model of one giving out platitudes in all open candor and reasonableness.

I have been led by these looks of her face to see some varying visions of my friend Annabel Lee.

One is a vision of her as a capable, elderly maiden aunt, one who stands ready in sickness and in health to do for me, and cooks little meat pies for me, and tells me when I'm spending too much money, and what to do for a cold.

One is a vision of her as a playful child-companion who is with me in all my summer days, and shares all her quaint thoughts with me, and asks me countless

questions and accepts my dictum as gospel.

One is a vision of her as a sister—one of that kind who has the best of all things in life whilst I must take the poor things; one of the kind that is to be married to a count from over the seas, and I must work and hurry to get her frocks ready for the wedding—and then go back to live in a small, dead village all the days of my life.

One is a vision of her as the quiet martyr-sister who comes at my call and retires at my bidding—and in this part my friend Annabel Lee walks with exceeding beauty.

One is a vision of her as a strong elderly friend who stands between me and all icy blasts, who lays out my daily life, who quiets my foolish excitement with her calmness and wisdom.

One is a vision of her as one who knows

no law, who leads me in strange highways and byways, and whose mind for me is a labyrinth wherein I walk in piteous confusion.

One is a vision of her as an extremely wicked person whom I regard with fear, whom it behooves me to hate, but whom I love.

One is a vision of her as a woman of any age who is, above all, uncompromising and unsympathetic. If I am joyous, she is placid; if I am heavy of heart, she is placid; if I am full of anticipation, she is placid; if I am in despair, she is placid.

One is a vision of her as a shadow among shadows. She is not real, I say to myself. One day I shall awake and find her vanished—without pain and without "sadness of farewell," and as if she had not been.

One is a vision of her as one who is in the world and of the world, and like the

rest of the world. And when I contemplate her thus my thought is, the best thing of all is to be in the world and of the world, and like the rest of the world, —to have the quality of humanness, to know the world so well as to be able to select the best of its treasures, and to make useful that in it which is useless.

But all these visions are vapory. There is not one of them that is my friend Annabel Lee. 'Tis the expressions of her lily face that give me these visions—not that which she says nor that which she does. In truth she is, in some way, like all the visions, but each is mingled so much with herself that the type is lost.

And my friend Annabel Lee, though she sits with the book of the two pages open before her and seems much interested in all that she finds in it, has yet the look of one who, if any one asked to borrow the book from her, would close it

quickly and give it up readily with no regret. And after she had given away the book, it seems as if she would pick up a flower from somewhere near, and twirl the stem in her thumb and finger, and glance out the window.

Not that she has a contempt for the present as for the future, but that it seems she is not dependent on the book of the two pages for her thought of it.

But also there is method in her contempt for the future. For she deigns to consider that the future becomes the present, as one day follows after another. But she touches it not in good faith until it is indeed the present.

My friend Annabel Lee, times, sits playing upon a little, old lute.

"The future," said my friend Annabel Lee, "is like a lute with no strings. You cannot play upon such a lute and fill the long, long corridors in your brain with

the thin, sweet, meaningless music. You can but sit stupidly staring into the cavity and thinking how joyous will be the music that shall come forth some day, as from time to time your lute is strung with strings—whereas you might better at that moment go out into your garden and fill the cavity with tomatoes and make haste with them to market. And while you sit dreaming over your stringless lute, in your impatience you press upon the stops and press too much and too often, so that when at last your lute is strung the stops will not work right, but will stick fast in one position. And when your other hand touches the strings there will be horrible discord—always horrible discord.

"I have never," said my friend Annabel Lee, "yet seen any one dreaming over an unstrung lute who did not finger the stops."

Having said this, my friend Annabel

Lee gazed out over my head at the flat, green Atlantic sea, and her hand went upon and about her lute-strings, and there came out music. And the stops worked right, like stops that had not been tampered with in the lute's unstrung days.

And the music that came out was like yellow wine to the head, and went not only into the corridors but into the towers as well, and low down by the moat and within and without the outer wall, and into the dungeon where had not been music before.

XVIII

ANOTHER VISION OF MY FRIEND ANNABEL LEE

AND I have a vision of my friend Annabel Lee as a princess in a tall, tall castle by the side of the sea—a castle made of dull red granite that glows a gorgeous crimson in the light of the setting sun.

And all day long there is no sign of life about the dull red castle, and also the winds are low and the blue water is very quiet. Far down the shore are only a few gulls flying, and wild ducks riding on the waves.

There is nothing moving on the jagged rocks for miles about the red castle, but there are growing in crevices some wild green weeds that are full of fair sweet

life. And all day the sky is pale blue.

The windows in the red castle are of thick, dark glass and are grated and mullioned and set about with iron. The look of these windows is rigid and bitter and it shuts out everything that is without.

The battlements of the castle are high and narrow and fearsome-looking and dark and very sullen. Were I upon the battlements I would gladly plunge off from them down upon the rocks, some hundreds of feet, and be dashed to pieces—or into the deep sea. But below there is a turret and a belfry, but no bell, and the turret is a sheltered and safe retreat looking out upon all. One who had not been content before in the world might be at last content within the turret of this tall, red castle by the side of the sea.

Away at the meeting of the sea and the sky there is a narrow line that is not pale blue like the sky nor dark blue like the

sea, but is only pale thin air. And I look at it expecting to see—But in the bright daylight I never know what I expect to see in the line of thin air at the meeting of the pale and the dark.

And so then all day everything is dead quiet, and my friend Annabel Lee is a princess inside the red castle.

How fair a princess is my friend Annabel Lee!

I fancy her in a beautiful white gown embroidered with gold threads. The gown is long and narrow and fits closely about the waist, and trails on the ground. And upon the left forefinger of the princess a great old silver ring set with an unpolished turquoise.

The rooms inside the red castle are fit rooms for such a princess. They are dark and high and narrow, and are adorned with frescoes and wall-paintings, and the thick windows of dark glass shine with

marvelous, myriad coloring where the light shows through. Before some of the windows bits of cut glass are hung, and these catch the sunbeams and straightway countless rainbows fall upon the gown and the hands and the hair of the princess.

When the sun sets a great bar of deep golden light falls from afar upon the red castle, and it becomes magnificent with crimson. The dark glass of the windows glows like old copper. The battlements are tipped with gold, and all is like a great flower that has but just bloomed.

After the sun has set and the crimson has faded once more from the red castle, and the copper from the windows, and before the light of day has gone, the sea and the sky take on different shades and different meanings, and the gulls and the wild ducks come up from far down the shore, and the rocks echo with their wild noises. The sky is full of flying cloud-

racks and the water rises high and has crests of white foam.

But the line at the horizon looks still the same.

Then the princess in her white gown opens a door high up in the tall castle and comes out under the turret. She comes forward to the railing and leans upon it with her fair chin resting in her hand.

I see her there across a long stretch of dark water, her white frock gleaming in the pale light—so high up and all—and a multitude of thoughts come upon me.

The princess looks at the thin line of sky opposite her, and looks so steadfastly that I turn my eyes from her and look there also.

And now there are manifold scenes there.

There is a scene of a knight going forth to do battle, with his black charger and his shining steel armor. And he wears

an orange plume in his helmet. His going is a brave thing. He is in the rising of his youth and strength. And for this reason I—and the princess on the turret—can see him falling gloriously in a fierce battle, with death in his veins, and the charger wandering off with no rider into the night. And the princess looks with envy upon one who can go forth and fall in battle.

There is a scene of a young woman in a small room working hard and persistently by a dim light at some exquisitely fine needlework upon an immense linen oblong. And her shoulders are bent and her eyes are strained and her hands are weary and her nerves shattered and crying out. But she does not leave off her work. She and her work are like an ant carrying away a desert grain by grain, and like one miserable person building up a pyramid, and like one counting all the

stars. One does not know whose is the linen or why she works, or whether money will be given her for it. But one may know that verily she will have her reward. Such people working like that in small rooms, and all, with wearied nerves, always have their reward. And the princess on the turret looked out at the woman as if she with her linen and her needle were the fortunate one.

There is a scene of French Canadians cutting hay and raking it early in the summer afternoon—women and men. The day is so beautifully hot and the perfume of the grass is so sweet that a tall red castle by the side of the sea is the dreariest place of all. The princess looks out from her turret with desolate purple eyes. She looks at the ring upon her forefinger —and together with her I wonder why all people were not made French Canadians making hay in the fields. Over their

heads is the air of the green French Canadian country; under their feet is the soft French Canadian hay. And they have appetites for their food.

There is a scene of a child playing in the mud under a green willow. She has a large pewter spoon to dip up great lumps of mud, and she takes up the lumps in her two hands and pats them and shapes them and lays them down in rows on a shingle. Water runs down through the meadow near by where she sits and she dips it up also in the spoon to thin out the mud. The rows of mud-cakes on the shingle are very neat and arranged with infinite care. The princess forgets to envy the child and her mud-cakes in the interest she takes in the making of them. Her face and her purple eyes even take on an indefinite look of contentment in that she is in the same world with so fit a thing.

Having looked long at the visions the princess takes her eyes from the line of thin sky and looks down into the tumbled dark water.

When all is seen, says the princess, there is nothing better than wild, dark water that is too vast to be measured and that is good for a thousand of years, and that contains yet as good fish as ever came out of it. It gives up pink shells upon the sand in the kindness of its heart, and it sends wild whistling gales up to the pinnacles of my red castle to sing for me and to tell me many stories. And it has wild winds wandering in and upon the high walls and caves along its rugged coast—and if I knew not that they were winds I would surely think them the voices of sea-maids singing—high, thin, piercing voices mingled with the sound of long, washing waves. And it gives out dreary lonesome cries—a loon calling in the night

mists a mile away, and wild geese honking—so that I know there are things in it and upon it a hundred times wilder and lonesomer than I. And it sends good ships driving against these great rocks, and dashes them to pieces, and human beings go down with them to rest for a thousand of years in the depths, so that I know it loves human beings well, and has need of them. In the forenoon of a day in July it melts my heart with its glad, warm sunshine and dazzles my eyes and fills me with comfort—and I know that life is a safe thing. When all is seen, says the princess, there is nothing better.

Thus I have a vision of my friend Annabel Lee as a princess in a tall, red castle by the side of the sea.

But neither is this my friend Annabel Lee. For she is more fascinating still, and her castle is even taller, and a deeper red—and more than all she is herself.

XIX

THE ART OF CONTEMPLATION

YESTERDAY my friend Annabel Lee and I sat comfortably opposite each other at a small table, eating our luncheon. She was very fair and good-natured—and we had tiny broiled fish, and some tea with slices of lemon in it, and bread, and green lettuce sprinkled over with vinegar and oil and red pepper, and two mugs of ale.

"Food is a lovely thing, don't you think?" said I.

"One of the best ever invented," said my friend Annabel Lee. "Have you considered how *much* would be gone from life if there were no food, and if we had not to eat three times every day?"

"Yes, I've considered it," I replied, "and it's a pleasure that never palls."

"It is so much more than pleasure," said my friend Annabel Lee. "It is a necessity and an art and a relaxation and an unburdening—and, dear me, it brings one up to the level of kings or of the beasts that perish.

"I have fancied," said my friend Annabel Lee, "a deal table set three times every day under a beautiful yew-tree in a far country. The yew-tree would be in a pasture where cattle are grazing, and always when I sat eating at the deal table the cows would stand about watching me. Sometimes on the deal table there would be brown bread and honey; sometimes there would be salt and cantaloupe; sometimes there would be lettuce with vinegar and pepper and oil; sometimes there would be whole-wheat bread and curds and cream in a brown earthen dish;

sometimes there would be walnuts and figs; sometimes there would be two little broiled fish; sometimes there would be peaches; sometimes there would be flat white biscuits and squares of brown fudge; sometimes there would be bread and cheese; sometimes there would be olives and Scotch bannocks; sometimes there would be a blue delft pot of chocolate and an egg; sometimes there would be tea and scones; sometimes there would be plum-cake; sometimes there would be bread and radishes; sometimes there would be wine and olives; sometimes there would be a strawberry tart.

"I should live over the hill from the yew-tree, and I should come there to eat at seven o'clock in the morning, and at one in the afternoon, and at seven in the evening. And meanwhile I should be busy at some work so that my eating would be as if I had earned it."

"What sort of work would you do?" I asked.

"I might wash fine bits of lace, "said my friend Annabel Lee, "and lay them out upon a sunny grass-plot to bleach and dry. Or I might pick berries and take them to market. Or I might sit in a doorway making baskets—I should make beautiful little baskets. Or I might care for a small garden, or a flock of geese—to feed them with grains and keep them from straying away. 'So many hours must I tend my flock, so many hours must I sport myself, so many hours must I contemplate'—I should do all these things while tending my flock, and I should tend my flock well. I should do all my work well, so that the food on the deal table, under the yew-tree, would taste as if it had been earned.

"But would it not be strange," said my friend Annabel Lee, eating daintily of

lettuce and fish, "after I had had this way of living in a country of always-summer for six months or seven months—oh, I should grow vastly weary of it! And not only should I grow weary of the garden or the geese or the baskets, and the deal table under the yew-tree, but I should grow weary of everything the fair green world could anyway offer. In the so many hours that I should contemplate I should arrive at this: there can be nothing better in the way of living than caring for a garden or a flock of geese, and going up a hill to a yew-tree to eat three times every day—*nothing*, if I do my work faithfully. So then when the gray dawn should break some morning and I should awaken and find an aching at my heart, I should know that the best had failed me, and I should see the Vast Weariness with me. 'Hast thou found me out, oh, mine enemy!' would run over and over in my

mind. And all that day the tending of the flocks would be a hard thing, and the apples on the deal table under the yew-tree would turn to dust in my mouth."

My friend Annabel Lee laid down her small silver fork, and placed her hands one upon another on her knee, and sat silent.

Oh, she was a beautiful, brilliant person sitting there! I wondered hazily as I watched her how much of the day's gold sunshine she made up for me, and how much would vanish were she to vanish.

Presently she talked again.

"Much depends,' said my friend Annabel Lee, "upon the amount of contemplation that one does in one's way of living, and upon how one's contemplation runs. Contemplation is a thing that does a great deal of mischief. But I daresay that when it as an art is made perfect it is a rare good thing and a neat, obedient servant, and knows exactly when to enter the

mind and when to leave it. And whosoever may have it, thus brought to a state of perfection, is a most fortunate possessor and must need go bravely down the world.

"Perhaps, now," said my friend Annabel Lee, "when one is a goose-girl and goes to eat at a deal table under a green yew-tree, one should contemplate only kings in gilded palaces One should begin at the beginning of a king's life, it may be, and follow it step by step through heaviness and strife until one sees, in one's vivid goose-girl fancy, the king at last tottering and white-haired and forsaken toward his lonely grave.

"Or else one should contemplate the life of a laborer who must eat husks all his days, and is not worthy of his hire, and goes from bad to worse and becomes a beggar.

"Or else one should contemplate the being of a sweet maid whose life is a fair, round, rose garden, and the thorns safely hidden and the stems pruned, and all. And one should likewise follow her step by step to her grave, or, if one so fancies, to the culmination of all happiness and success.

"For the idea is that in all one's contemplation, when one is a goose-girl, one should contemplate anything and everything except the being and condition of a goose-girl.

"But a better idea still," said my friend Annabel Lee, "would be to not contemplate at all, you know, but eat the radishes and other things, under the yew-tree, and rejoice.

"At any rate," said my friend Annabel Lee, "we need not contemplate *now*—what with these two little fishes and these green, crisp leaves."

She picked up her small silver fork again and went to eating lettuce.

And presently we both lifted our mugs of good ale and drank to that which would be a better idea still.

CONCERNING LITTLE WILLY KAATENSTEIN

I HAD one day given my friend Annabel Lee the bare outline of the facts in a case, and I asked her if she would kindly make a story from it and tell it me.

So my friend Annabel Lee told me a little story that also runs in my mind, someway, in measure and rhythm.

"There lived in a town in Montana," said my friend Annabel Lee, "not very long ago, in a quiet street, a family of that sort of persons which is called Jewish. And it is so short a time ago that they are there yet.

"Their name was Kaatenstein.

"There was Mrs. Kaatenstein and Mr. Kaatenstein and the four young children,

Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein and little Willy Kaatenstein.

"And there was the hired girl whose name was Emma.

"And there was Uncle Will, Mrs. Kaatenstein's brother, who lived with them.

"Mrs. Kaatenstein was short and dark and sometimes quite cross, and she always put up fruit in its season, with the help of the hired girl, and the kitchen was then very warm.

"And Mr. Kaatenstein was also dark, but was a tall, slim man, and was kind and fond of the children, especially the two little girls. Mrs. Kaatenstein was fond of the children also, but mostly fond of the two boys.

"And Harry Kaatenstein was much like his mother, only he was not so dark, and he was ten years old.

"And Leah Kaatenstein was ten years

old also—the two were twins—and she had an eye for strict economy, and wore plain gingham frocks, and had a long dark braid of hair, and played with very homely dolls.

"And Jenny Kaatenstein was seven years old and was most uncommonly fat, and was rarely seen without a bit of unleavened bread in her hand—for the children were allowed to have all that they wanted of unleavened bread. They did not want very much of it, except Jenny. And they all preferred to eat leavened bread spread with butter and sprinkled with sugar—but they couldn't have as much as they wanted of that.

"And little Willy Kaatenstein was only four and pronounced all his words correctly and seemed sometimes possessed of the wisdom of the serpent. He had very curly hair, and it seemed an unwritten law that whenever a grown-up lady

passed by and saw the children playing on the walk in front of their house she must stop and exclaim what a pretty boy little Willy was and ask him for one of his curls. Whereat little Willy would stare up into the grown-up lady's face in a most disconcerting fashion and perhaps ask her for one of *her* curls. Or if the groceryman or the butcher would stop on his way to the kitchen and ask little Willy what was his name and how old was he, little Willy would answer with surprising promptness, and directly would ask the groceryman or the butcher what was *his* name and how old was *he*.

"And Emma, the hired girl, was rawboned and big-fisted and frightfully cold-blooded and unsympathetic. And she had a sister who came to see her and sat in the hot kitchen talking, while Emma pared potatoes or scrubbed the floor. The sister's name was Juley, and she some-

times brought strange, green candy to the children, which their mother never allowed them to eat. And sometimes Juley brought them chewing-gum, which they were not allowed to chew.

"And Uncle Will was a short, stout man, with a face that was nearly always flushed. He seemed fond of beer. There were a great many cases of beer in the cellar which belonged to Uncle Will. And there were cases full of beer-bottles that had all been emptied, and the children would have liked to sell the bottles, but they were not allowed to sell bottles. Uncle Will was also fond of little Willy, and on summer evenings when he and Mr. Kaatenstein were at home, and after they had eaten dinner, Uncle Will might have been heard inviting little Willy, in his hoarse, facetious voice, to come and have a glass of beer with him. And when little Willy, with his short curls and his

small white suit, would come and just taste of the beer and would make a wry mouth and shed a few abortive tears over its bitterness, Uncle Will would laugh very heartily and jovially indeed.

"Mrs. Kaatenstein had a great many ducks and geese in the back-yard and spent much time among them, fattening them to eat and fussing over them, in the forenoons. So the children never played there in the forenoon.

"There were a great number of things that the Kaatenstein children were not allowed to do — the things they were allowed to do were as nothing by comparison, and the things they were allowed to do were, for the most part, things they did not care about.

"They had each a square iron bank in which were ever so many silver quarters and dimes and half-dollars and nickels and gold pieces, too, for they were a

Jewish family. Their father and their Uncle Will kept dropping coins into the little slits in the tops of the banks from time to time, and friends of the family would also kindly contribute, and their uncles and aunts would send money for that purpose all the way from Cincinnati. So there was wealth in these banks, but the children were not allowed to have any of it. And they were never given any money 'to throw away buying things,' as their mother said, except a nickel once in a long while—one nickel for the four of them.

"And there were toys that their father and mother and Uncle Will had bought for them, and others that were sent by the uncles and aunts in Cincinnati, but they were never allowed to play with them. The toys were kept in a large black-walnut bureau in their mother's bed-room. There was a small, tinkling piano that Leah Kaatenstein's Aunt Bar-

bara had sent to her, or that had been sent to her parents in trust for her. And there was a little engine, that would run on a track, which had once been given to Harry Kaatenstein. And there was an immense wax doll which had fallen to Jenny Kaatenstein's lot. And little Willy Kaatenstein was the reputed owner of a small mechanical circus with tiny wooden acrobats and horses and a musical box beneath the platform. And there were other toys of all kinds; for the relatives in Cincinnati had been lavish. But the children were not allowed to make use of them, so they languished in the black-walnut bureau.

"And Harry Kaatenstein had a fine gold watch that his mother had given him, but he was not allowed to wear it or even look at it. It was kept in a jewel-case in her bed-room.

"And Leah Kaatenstein had a fine gold

watch that her grandmother in Cincinnati had sent, but she was not allowed to wear it or even look at it. It was kept in her mother's jewel-case.

"And Jenny Kaatenstein had a fine gold watch that her aunt Rebecca had sent, but she was not allowed to wear it or even look at it. It was kept in her mother's jewel-case.

"And little Willy Kaatenstein had a fine gold watch that Uncle Will had bought for him—and Uncle Will, who was a privileged character in the house, would sometimes take little Willy's watch from Mrs. Kaatenstein's jewel-case and give it to little Willy to wear in the evening when the family was gathered in the dining-room. And Uncle Will would drink his beer and ask little Willy what time was it. But before Mrs. Kaatenstein put little Willy to bed she replaced the watch carefully in the jewel-case.

"The children had a great many such possessions, but what they really had to play with was a small, much-battered wagon which they put to many uses in the course of a day. Sometimes it was a fire-engine, and sometimes a hose-cart, and sometimes a motor-car, and sometimes a carriage, and sometimes an ambulance, and sometimes a go-cart for Leah Kaatenstein's homely dolls (which by some strange chance were hers to do with as she would—they were not of excessive value), and sometimes for a patrol wagon, and sometimes for a water-cart. They had also a little rocking chair with which they played house on the porch. Both the chair and the wagon were much overworked and were most pathetic in appearance. The children often grew weary of playing always with these two things and languished for other amusement. Sometimes Leah Kaatenstein subsided into the

rocking chair with her homely dolls in her lap and talked to them seriously, telling them many things which would be of use to them all their lives and instilling into them strict rules of economy. And sometimes Harry Kaatenstein sat on the lowest step of the porch with the nozzle of the long, rubber hose, which was attached to the faucet at the side of the house, and with which Mr. Kaatenstein or Uncle Will watered the grass in the evening. The children were not allowed to water the grass, but there was usually water enough trickling from the hose for Harry Kaatenstein to make little whirlpools on the steps, which he did, causing loss of life among bugs of divers kinds. And sometimes Jenny Kaatenstein, with her inevitable bit of unleavened bread, sat on the top step, moon-faced and pudgy, resting from her labors. And sometimes little Willy Kaatenstein climbed up and sat

upon the post at the bottom of the stoop and kicked it viciously with his heels. He often sat there kicking, as could be plainly seen by the dents in the post.

"One warm day the Kaatenstein children were thus languishing after having played hard with the wagon, and Emma was ironing in the kitchen. Their mother was away for the afternoon and the children had a delightful sense of freedom, even with the grim, big-fisted Emma in charge. Only they wished they had a nickel. Harry Kaatenstein said that if they had a nickel he should certainly go down to Grove's, a block and a half away, and purchase some brown and white cookies. At which little Willy Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein—more especially Jenny Kaatenstein—smacked their lips, and Leah Kaatenstein sighed and remarked that Harry's extravagance was very discouraging.

"Presently, wonderful to relate, Emma appeared around the corner, from the kitchen, with four thick slices of bread-and-butter slightly sprinkled with sugar, and the children gazed very eagerly in her direction. Jenny Kaatenstein dropped her piece of unleavened bread and half-started to meet Emma, but thought better of it, knowing Emma's ways. Emma distributed the slices of bread, and fastened little Willy Kaatenstein's hat on more firmly with the elastic under his chin, and informed the children that if they knew what was good for themselves they would not get into any mischief while *she* had charge of them. Then she went back to her ironing.

"The children were delighted with their bread-and-butter, and their imagination played lightly about it.

" 'My bread-and-butter s raspberry ice-cream,' said Harry Kaatenstein.

"'*My* bread-and-butter's *choc'late* ice-cream,' said Leah Kaatenstein, waxing genial.

"'*My* bread-and-butter's *vanilla* ice-cream,' said Jenny Kaatenstein.

"But little Willy Kaatenstein said never a word, for his bread-and-butter seemed very good to him *as* bread-and-butter.

"Their bread-and-butter someway put new life into them and made them more fully awake to the fact that their mother was away for the afternoon. After all, they were not afraid of any one but their mother, and she being gone, should they not enjoy life for once?

"When they had finished eating they had a brilliant idea.

"'I'm going to shake a nickel out of my bank,' said Harry Kaatenstein.

"'*I'm* going to shake a nickel out of *my* bank,' said Leah Kaatenstein, in surprising luxury of spirit.

"'*I'm* going to shake a nickel out of *my* bank,' said Jenny Kaatenstein.

"And little Willy Kaatenstein said never a word, but ran at the first inkling of the idea immediately to the dining-room where the four banks were standing, on the mantel above the fire-place, and pushed up a chair and took down his own green bank. And then he slid back the little piece of iron that was just under the slot in the top of the bank, and shook, shook, shook, with very little noise, and lo, not a nickel but a five-dollar gold coin rolled out on the floor!

"And then Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein rushed in and seized their banks and began shaking, shaking with much *clank, clank* of silver and gold against iron—for was not their mother far from them?—whilst little Willy Kaatenstein stood by with his gold piece clasped tight in his

hand. Even his young intelligence knew its marvelous value, and he thought it wise not to reveal his treasure to Leah Kaatenstein's horrified gaze.

"'I'm going down to Grove's and buy gum-drops with my nickel,' said Harry Kaatenstein, pounding and shaking, but never a nickel appeared for the reason that he had forgotten the little iron slide, which only once in a while fell away from under the slot and never at the right time.

"'*I'm* going down to Grove's and buy a long licorice pipe with *my* nickel,' said Leah Kaatenstein—a long licorice pipe was the very most she could get for her money—also shaking and pounding fruitlessly, for she too had forgotten the little iron slide.

"'*I'm* going down to Grove's and buy some cookies with *my* nickel,' said Jenny Kaatenstein, likewise pounding and

shaking and forgetting the little iron slide.

"And little Willy Kaatenstein said never a word, but when he had learned what to buy with his money he ran out of the front door and down the street to Grove's on the corner.

"Now when Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein considered and rejoiced over the absence of their mother, they forgot at the same time to consider and fear the perilous nearness of Emma ironing in the kitchen —the kitchen being next to the dining-room.

"Suddenly while they were in the midst of their work and were shaking and pounding away for dear life, unconscious of all else, the door leading into the kitchen was pushed open with ominous quiet and the head of Emma appeared. It was an unprepossessing head at all

times, and it was a dangerous-looking head at that moment.

"Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein perceived this vision at once, and an appalling silence like the tomb followed the clamor that had been.

" 'So this is what you're up to, you young limbs!' said Emma, and swooped down and pounced upon them before they could possibly escape, though they had made for the door with very creditable speed. Emma held them with one hand while she picked up the banks with the other. She remarked, in unmeasured terms, upon the condition of the waxed dining-room floor, upon the vicious qualities of some children whom she mentioned by name, upon what would happen to them when their mother came home, and upon what was going to happen to them right away.

"And she led them upstairs to their mother's bed-room and, after shaking them well, locked them in and went downstairs, carrying the key with her.

"Meanwhile little Willy Kaatenstein had gone upon his interesting errand at Grove's on the corner.

"He went into the shop and stood before a glittering glass case of things.

" 'And what'll it be for Master Kaatenstein to-day?' said the man behind the glittering case.

" 'I want gum-drops and licorice pipes and cookies — and some watermelons,' said little Willy Kaatenstein and laid the shining gold coin before the grocer's astonished eyes, for the grocer had expected to see the Kaatenstein semi-occasional nickel — nothing more or less.

" 'Is this yours, Master Kaatenstein?'

said the grocer, eyeing the coin with suspicion.

" 'Of course it's mine,' said little Willy Kaatenstein, impatiently. 'And I want the things right away.'

" 'Well, I suppose its all right, my boy,' said the grocer. 'If it isn't, *one* of us'll have to suffer, I guess. Now, what did you say you wanted?'

"Little Willy Kaatenstein repeated his order, and added other items.

" 'Now, Master Kaatenstein,' said the grocer, 'you never will be able to carry all that. That'll make a pile of stuff. Better run back and get your little wagon'—for he knew the Kaatenstein wagon, having often placed in it a paper of sugar or a sack of salt or three tins of something according to Mrs. Kaatenstein's order—for the children to draw home.

"So little Willy Kaatenstein ran back and got the little wagon from the front

yard, and the man loaded the things into it. 'Must be going to have a picnic,' he observed.

"There was certainly a pile of stuff. There were long licorice pipes enough in the wagon to surfeit the appetites of the four Kaatensteins for many a day, and the name of the gum-drops was legion And there were two watermelons, and cookies enough to satisfy even Jenny Kaatenstein's capacious desire. Also there were nuts and some dyspeptic-looking pies, and a great many little dogs and cats and elephants made of a very tough kind of candy which all the Kaatenstein children thought perfectly lovely. Also there were figs in boxes and chocolate-drops and red and white sticks of candy, flavored with peppermint fit to make one's mouth water. And all these things were in surprising quantity and made so heavy a load that little Willy Kaatenstein was

hard put to it to drag it up the street. But little Willy Kaatenstein had strong little arms and he and the wagon made slow and sure progress back to the Kaatenstein home. The grocer stood out in front of his shop gazing after the boy and the boy's wagon and the wagon's contents with a puzzled and somewhat dubious smile.

"Little Willy Kaatenstein proceeded into his front yard with the wagon and around to the back on the side of the house where the kitchen door was not. He dragged the wagon quietly on to the farther end of the back yard and opened the gate of the pen made of laths, where Mrs. Kaatenstein's ducks and geese were kept. He drew the wagon in and back behind the duck-house, and left it.

"Then little Willy Kaatenstein closed the lath gate and ran to find Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny

Kaatenstein and invite them to the feast.

"But they were nowhere to be found. He hunted about in the house and out of doors, but there was no sign of them, and for some reason he thought he would not ask Emma questions touching on their whereabouts.

"So having hunted for his relatives all that he thought best, little Willy Kaatenstein could but go out on the highways and byways and call in the lame, the halt, and the blind. Accordingly he slipped through the fence and went back into the alley-way to the house immediately behind his own, in search of Bill and Katy Kelly, two Irish friends of the Kaatenstein children—with whom they were not allowed to play. Bill and Katy Kelly, to be sure, were neither lame nor halt nor blind, but were very sound in limb and constitution, and were extremely responsive to little Willy Kaatenstein's invita-

tion to come to the feast. Feasts were things that Bill and Katy Kelly reveled in—when they had opportunity.

"So in company with little Willy Kaatenstein—he in his curls and his white suit, and the two in very dingy raiment—they hied them through the fence to the feast. They reached the duck-yard without being seen by Emma, the arch-enemy, and found the little wagon safe, and the ducks and geese staring and peering and stretching their necks at it and its contents with much curiosity.

"This curiosity, on the part of the fowls, must have changed to amazement when they beheld the attack made on the wagon and the strange things in the way of eating that followed.

"How Bill and Katy Kelly did eat and how they reveled! And little Willy Kaatenstein literally waded in gum-drops and long licorice pipes. They began the

feast with pie; from pie they went at figs; from figs they transferred to the tough little animals; and from that to cookies; and from cookies to long licorice pipes. Then they stopped eating consecutively and went at the entire feast hap-hazard.

"They ate fast and furiously for several minutes.

"Then the first ardor of the feast subsided, and little Willy Kaatenstein, for one, seemed to lose all interest not only in feasts but in the world at large. He sat back upon a box, which contained a duck sitting on twelve eggs, and looked at the ground with the air of one who has someway lost his perspective.

"Bill and Katy Kelly still ate, but more, it seemed, from a sense of duty to themselves than from appetite, and presently their eating became desultory, and they began to throw remnants of the feast to

the fowls. These at first gazed askance at the extraordinary food thus lavished upon them—but finally went at it madly, as if they, too, reveled in feasts.

"Mrs. Kaatenstein's face must need have been a study could she have seen her cherished ducks and geese stuffing their crops with licorice pipes and gum-drops.

"But Mrs. Kaatenstein was out for the afternoon.

"While these things were happening in her duck-yard, no less interesting ones were taking place up-stairs in her bed-room, where Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein were prisoners of Emma.

"At first they merely sat on the win-dow-seat and discussed the several un-toward things that they wished would happen to Emma. Having hanged, drawn and quartered that liberal-pro-

portioned lady until they could no more, they felt better. Then they looked over their mother's room in search of amusement, with the result that the black-walnut bureau, containing the toys with which they were not allowed to play, was made to give forth the wealth of its treasures. The floor of Mrs. Kaatenstein's bed-room presented a motley appearance. Jenny Kaatenstein even forgot to miss her bit of unleavened bread in her excitement over the fact that she actually was holding her own huge wax doll in her lap. And the circus and the steam-engine and the tinkling piano and the tea-sets and the barking dogs and the picture books and the manifold other things were at last put to those uses for which they had been destined. And they even went to the jewel-case and got out their watches.

"But Harry Kaatenstein and Leah

Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein, though they were pleasantly excited, were yet highly uneasy in their minds. They knew they had yet to render up payment for the day's business.——

"The rest of the tale is obvious enough," said my friend Annabel Lee, laughing gently and changing her tone.

"But please tell it," said I, with much eagerness.

"Well, then," said my friend Annabel Lee:—

"The afternoon waned, and Mrs. Kaatenstein came home. She heard unusual noises in her beloved duck-yard, and fled thither, as fast as her goodly proportions would allow.

"Her eyes met a sight which was maddening to them.

"They beheld little Willy Kaatenstein, looking decidedly pale and puffy, sitting weakly on a box containing a setting-

duck—and the two objectionable Kelly children actually at that moment feeding her choicest goose with gum-drops. Scattered all about the once neat duck yard was rubbish in frightful variety, and a half-dozen of her tiny ducklings were busy at an atrocious watermelon. Certainly no one but those Irish young ones could have brought in so much litter. It did not take Bill and Katy Kelly long to gather that they were not wanted there. Mrs. Kaatenstein quite quenched, for the time, their fondness for feasts. As they went, she ordered them to take their vile belongings with them, which they were willing enough to do—as much of them as they could carry. They bestowed an apprehensive glance on little Willy Kaatenstein—but little Willy Kaatenstein's face was only pale, puffy and very passive. Having dispersed the Kellys, Mrs. Kaatenstein led her son into the house and

stopped in the kitchen to demand of Emma why she allowed such things to happen, and ordered her to go at once and clean out the duck-yard. Emma obeyed, first giving up Mrs. Kaatenstein's bed-room key and explaining her own possession of it.

"Then Mrs. Kaatenstein, after doctoring little Willy Kaatenstein's poor little stomach and laying him neatly out on a sofa in a cool, dark room, went on to her own room, whence proceeded unusual noises. Unlocking and opening the door, a sight the like of which she had not of late years known overwhelmed her spirit.

"The short, dead silence that followed her appearance on the threshhold was but emphasized by the merry tinkling of the gay little circus which had been wound up and would not stop, even under the dark influence of impending tragedy.——

"Well," said my friend Annabel Lee, "the case of Harry Kaatenstein and Leah Kaatenstein and Jenny Kaatenstein was attended to by their mother. She whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed.

"But as for little Willy Kaatenstein—not looking in the least pale or puffy, he sat that evening, after dinner, on Uncle Will's lap, wearing his own fine gold watch out of the jewel-case, and being continually invited to have a glass of beer.

"But in the kitchen, Emma was telling Juley that though she had once thought a great deal of little Willy Kaatenstein she now honestly believed him to be the very worst one of the four.——

"That story," said my friend Annabel Lee, "was very tiresome. You shouldn't ask me to tell you stories."

"I am sorry if it tired you," I said. "But the story was entirely fascinating. It was

exactly like the Kaatensteins. And you, telling a story of the Kaatensteins, are delicately, oh, delicately incongruous!"

"Were *you* ever at a feast in the Kaatenstein duck-yard?" said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Yes, indeed," said I, "along with Bill and Katy Kelly, at the age of eleven. And I have seen every toy in the black-walnut bureau." "And which would you," said my friend Annabel Lee, "to be at a feast with the Kaatensteins at the age of eleven, or here, now, with me?"

"When all's said," said I, "here with you, now, by far."

" 'Tis very good of you," said my friend Annabel Lee, and looked at me with her purple eyes.

XXI

A BOND OF SYMPATHY

HAVING told me stories, my friend Annabel Lee demanded that I should write a bit of verse to read to her.

My verse is rather rotten verse, and I told her so. She replied that the fact of its being rotten had but little to do with the matter, that most verse was rotten, anyway, and usually the more rotten the better it suited the reader.

She was in that mood.

So I wrote some lines and read them to her—there was nothing else to do. She had been kind in telling me stories, though probably she told them because it amused her. When I finished reading, she said that the verse was not rotten at

all. She, for her part, would call it not yet quite ripe.

"That's the *verse*," said my friend Annabel Lee. "As for the meaning of the words in it, that betrays many things. The most vivid thing it betrays is your age. It shows that you have passed over the period of nineteen and have arrived at exactly one-and-twenty. And therefore it is a triumphant bit of verse.

"Don't you know," said my friend Annabel Lee, "how much verse there is thrown upon the world that means *nothing* whatsoever? And so when one does happen upon a bit of it that tells even the smallest thing, like the height of the writer, or the color of his hair, then one feels repaid.

"And your verse tells still other things," said my friend Annabel Lee. "One is that you still think, as we've agreed once

before, of that which will one day open wondrously for you."

"I did not agree to that, you know," said I.

"Well, then, I agreed to it for both of us," said my friend Annabel Lee. "And your verse betrays that so plainly that one is led to feel that there are persons who grow more hopeful with each bit of darkness that comes to them. If your life were all fire and sunshine you would write very different verse. And if it told anything at all it would tell that while you looked forward to still more fire and sunshine, you would somehow know you were not really to have any more, but that it would grow less and less in the years, and by the time you were an old lady, and still not nearly ready to die, it would give out entirely."

"That would be by the law of compensation," said I. "And it would require

a great deal of fire and sunshine in her early life to compensate any one who had grown into an old lady and had run out of it."

"So it would," said my friend Annabel Lee. "Now, when you grow old—though you will never be that which is called an old lady—you will be quite mellow. And probably the less you have to be mellow over, the mellower you will be."

"I don't wish to be that way," said I. "I think that kind of person is pitiful, living year after year."

"You'll not be pitiful," said my friend Annabel Lee. "You can not be mellow and pitiful at the same time. It may be that to be mellow is the best thing, and the most comfortable. It maybe that people struggle through a long life with but one object in their minds—to be mellow in their old age. This verse certainly

sounds as if *you* were looking forward to it."

"I can't see that it sounds that way, at all," said I.

"Of course you can't," said my friend Annabel Lee. "You wrote the verse, and you are but you."

"And what are some of the other things that it betrays?" I inquired.

"It betrays," said my friend Annabel Lee, "that you are better in detail than you are in the entire. And if that is true of you in one thing it is true of you in everything. I daresay your friends find things in you that they like extremely, but you in the entire they look upon as something that has much to acquire."

"Not my *friends*?" said I.

"Yes, your *friends*," said my friend Annabel Lee.

"That is a bitter thing for a verse to

show," I made answer, "and a bitter thing to have in my mind."

"Well, and aren't you wise enough to prefer the bitter things to the sweet things?" said my friend Annabel Lee. "For every sweet thing that you have in your mind, it is yours to pay a mighty bitter price. Whereas the bitter things are valuable possessions. And if it is true about your friends, of course you wish to know it."

"No," said I, "I don't wish to know it."

"But, at least," said my friend Annabel Lee, with a wonderful softening of her voice into something that was sincere and enchanting, "believe what I told you about it, for in that case you and I have that good gift—a bond of sympathy. For if I had friends, of that kind, they would look upon me as something with much to acquire, very sure. But don't," said my friend Annabel Lee, hastily, "consider the

bond of sympathy a sweet thing—remember the mighty bitter price."

"I will believe what you said about the friends," said I—"and it is bitter enough to purge my soul for a time. The bond of sympathy is not a sweet thing, anyway. I don't expect to have to pay for it— And it brings a feeling of restfulness. —"

"A bond of sympathy," said my friend Annabel Lee, "comes already paid for. It does very well. It is not sweet—it tastes more like a cigarette or an olive.

"About the verse "—said my friend Annabel Lee.

"Please let's not talk about that any more," said I.

"Whatever you like," said my friend Annabel Lee.

And we talked of George Sand and her books.

But, anyway, this was my bit of unripe verse:

Yesterday my star went down in the deep shadows.
It went lightly
Like the rippling of water;
And many tiny dear things went with it, and I watched them:
I knew that my star would never rise again.

Yesterday my star went down in the deep shadows.
It went softly
Like the half-lights of evening;
And as it went my frantic thoughts pursued it without hoping:
I knew that my star would never rise again.

Yesterday my star went down in the deep shadows.
It went tenderly
Like my friend who loves me;
But since it's gone the way shows dark—my two eyes are tired watching:
I know that my star will never rise again.

XXII

THE MESSAGE OF A TENDER SOUL

"THE MESSAGE of a tender soul," said my friend Annabel Lee, "is a thing that will go far, oh, so far, and lose nothing of itself.

"When all things in the world are counted the beautiful things are in the greatest numbers. And when all the things in the world are counted the message of a tender soul counts greatly more than many.

"A tender soul receives back no gratitude for its message, and looks for no gratitude, and does not know what gratitude means. And the tenderness of the message is all unmade and all unknown, but is felt for long, long years.

"The message of a tender soul goes

over the sea into the lonesomeness of the night and nothing stops it on the way, for all know what it is and bid it godspeed. And it goes down and around a mountain to a house where there is woe, and if before it came that house had turned away charity and love and friendship and good-will and peace, and had sent a curse after them all, still it opens wide its doors for the message of a tender soul. For its coming is not heralded, and the soul that sends it does not even know its tenderness, and the hearts of all in that house where there is woe—they are deeply, unknowingly comforted. And it goes upon the barrenness of a countryside where there is not one green thing growing, and the barrenness is then more than paradise, had paradise no such message. And it goes where lovely flowers grow in thousands, where sparkling water mingles with sparkling water and

quenches thirst, wnere the long gray moss hangs from birch-trees, where pale clouds float—and itself is more beautiful than all these. Have you felt all those tender things that go down into the depths? They bring comfort, but also they bring tears into the eyes and pain into the heart. The message of a tender soul—what does it bring but ineffable comfort to the heart? You do not feel that it is a message, you do not feel it to be a divinely beautiful thing. There are no sudden salt tears. Only the message is there—only it does that for which it is sent. Have you gone out and done all the work that you could do, and done it faithfully and asked no reward—and have you come back and cried out in bitterness of spirit? Then, it may be, came wondrously beautiful things from over the way to tell you, Take heart. But there was no 'take heart' for you. Then it may

be there came from that way which you were not looking, the message of a tender soul. Then there was comfort, and with no tears of pain and no bitter, bitter tears of joy. There was deep comfort so that you could go out and work again and for no reward. There is work that has no reward. For those that work for no reward there can be no comfort in all the vastness except the message of a tender soul. Have you gone out and done all the evil you could do, in cruel ways, and taken away faith in some one from some one—and have come back and suffered more than any of them? Then it may be there came the message of a tender soul—and many, many other things faded from your heart. And still there were no tears. And if there is too much for you in living, and if the countless things near and far in the world crowd over you and fill you with horrible

fear, then, if the message of a tender soul comes, one by one they step backward, and in your heart is comfort for the long, long years.

"There have been those that have had happiness that was more than the world, but in the end there was no comfort, for their happiness brought with it tears of joy and emotion that had limitless source.

"If you have wanted happiness and have hungered and thirsted, after there came the message of a tender soul, you were content with a branch from a green pine-tree.

"If you have felt a thousand tender things and have drunk from a thousand cups and then have been about to write it in black lettering that all, *all* have failed you—if then there came the message of a tender soul, you have written instead that nothing has failed you, and you have

turned back your footsteps and have tried it all again.

"If for you and me to-day there should come over frozen hills and green meadows from a far country the message of a tender soul, should we shiver when it is dark and should we dread the coming of the years, and should we consider what would bring weariness and what would bring rest, and should we measure and contemplate? But no. For the message of a tender soul is a message from one that has found the quiet and is absolutely at peace, and has gone so far toward the stars and so far and wide over the green earth that she has indeed reached the truth, and her soul gives of its tenderness without thinking, and without knowing, and all in the dark.

"And when we should feel the message, all without knowing, there would come again that long-since faith, and that full-

ness of life, and that sense of realness, and the shining of the sun would be of new meaning.

"It may be," said my friend Annabel Lee, "that we will have to go still farther into the wilderness before the message comes, and it may be also that it will not come for many years.

"But it is in all ways comforting to know there is such a thing."

More than I considered the message that might come, I considered the voice with no hardness but with softness, and the lily face of my friend Annabel Lee.

¥¥III

ME TO MY FRIEND ANNABEL LEE

I WROTE the day before yesterday this letter to my friend Annabel Lee:

Montreal. ——

Dear Fair Lady:

Since I have come to stay in Montreal for a time, and you still in Boston, I have seen you, times, even more vividly than when I was there. You come into my dreams at dead of night.

Can you imagine what you are in my dreams?

I look forward impatiently to the end of my time here, so that I may go to find you again;—but my impatience grows someway less when I think that if I am with you this vision may vanish from my dreams.——

I will write you of some of the things I have found here.

There is much in Montreal that takes me back into the dim mists—the wonderful days when I had lived only three years. It was not here, but farther west—still what is in Canada is Canadian and does not change nor vary. This Canadian land and water and air awakens shadow-things in my memory and visions and voices of the world as it was when I was three.

It is all exceeding fair to look upon about here. The fields are green, not as they are in Massachusetts, but as they might be in the south of France. There is a beautiful, broad, blue river that can be seen from far off, and it sends out a haze and then all is gray French country, and gray French villages. When you come near you see the French peasants working in the fields—old men and maidens,

and very old, strange-looking women, all with no English words in their mouths and no English thing in their lives if they can avoid it. They wear brass rings on their hands and in their ears, and the women wear gay-colored fish-wife petticoats, and in all their faces and eyes is that look that comes from working always among vegetables in the sun, the look of a piteous, useless brain.

And there is the strange, long, tree-covered hill that they call Mount Royal. I have in my mind a picture of it in a bygone century, when an adventurous, brave Frenchman and a few Indians of the wild stood high at its summit—he with the French flag unfurled in the wind, and the Indians shading their eyes and looking off and down into the valley. And there was not one sign of human life in the valley, and all was wild growth and tangled underbrush, and death-like silence, except

maybe for the far-off sound of flying wild hoofs in the forest. And now this hill is the lodging-place of many things hidden among the trees—convents set about with tall, thick, solid stone walls, and inside the walls are heavy-swathed nuns who have said their farewell to all things without. And there are hospitals founded and endowed in the name of the Virgin, and Jesuit colleges, and the lodges of priests and brotherhoods.

And in the midst of the St. Lawrence valley where the Indians looked down is this old gray-stone city, and in the Place d'Armes square is a fine triumphant statue of Maisonneuve with his French flag.

This gray-stone city is builded thick with gray-stone cathedrals, and some of them are very fine, and some of them are parti-colored as rainbows inside, and all of them are Roman Catholic and French.

The Protestant churches are but churches.

And the Notre Dame cathedral, when the setting sun touches its great, tall, gray, twin towers with red, is even more than French and Roman Catholic. The white-faced women in the nunnery at the side of it must need have a likeness of those eternal towers graven on their narrow devout hearts. Within, the Notre Dame is most gorgeous with brilliant-colored saints and Virgins and a passion of wealth and Romanism.

And is it not wonderful to think that many of these gray-stone buildings and dwellings were here in the sixteen hundreds, and that gray nuns walked in these same green gardens two centuries ago? And the same country was about here, and the same blue water.

And when all is said, the country and the blue water have been here always,

and are the most wonderful things of all. If the gray-stone buildings were of yellow gold and of emeralds and brilliants, the green country would be no fairer and no less exquisitely fair, and the blue of the water would go no deeper into the heart and no less deep, and the pale clouds would float high and gently with the same old-time mystery. And the centuries they know are countless.

The natural things are the same in Massachusetts—but here they seem someway even older. You feel the breath of the very long-ago among the wildness of green—as if only human beings had come and gone, but it had never changed its smallest twig or grass-blade. It seems but waiting, and its patience in the waiting is without end.

Away on the other side of the tree-covered mountain I have seen a flat, gently-curved, country road with the sun-

shine upon it and a few little English sparrows alighting and flying along it and picking at grains. And the grass by the road-side was tall and rank and sweet to the senses, and the road led to farms and the river and the wildwood. Cows were feeding by a shallow brook, and there were sumach bushes, thick and dark, near by.

For several minutes when my eyes rested upon this I felt absolutely content with all of life.

While I'm telling you this, Annabel Lee, I am not quite sure you are listening —and for myself, I see *you* much more than anything I have talked about. I am wondering how it is possible that you have lived only fourteen years—even the fourteen years of a Japanese woman. And I see again in my mind—your red lips, and your dead-black hair, and your purple eyes, and your wonderful hands,

and your forehead with the widow's peak, and the two short side-locks that curve around, and your slimness in the scarlet and gold-embroidered gown.

And most of all I see your eyes when they are full of soft purple shadows, and your lips when they are tender—and your heart, as I have seen it before, and its depths which are of the white purity.

Last night there was the vision of you with your purple eyes wide and gazing down at me with the white lids still. And I was horror-struck at the look of world-weariness in them—how that it is terrible, how that it follows one into the darkness and light, how that it is grief and rage and madness, how that it makes the heart ache until all the life-nerves ache with it—and there is no end; how that it is life and death, and one can not escape! —a world of tears and entreating and vows; but no, there is no escape.

And then again I looked up at your purple eyes gazing down at me full of strong, high scorn and triumph. "Do you think we have not conquered life?" they said. "Do you think we can not crush out all the little demons that presume to torture? Do you think we can not conquer *everything?* Who is there that we have not known? Where is there that we have not been? Are there any still, still shadows that we have cringed before? Are there any brilliant lights upon the sky that we have not faced boldly and put aside? And the stones and the stars and the mists on the sea are less—less than we,—*we* are the greatest things of all."

Thus your two eyes when I slept, and when I woke I saw you again as you have looked so many times—the expression of your red lips, and your voice with vague bitterness, and your lily face inscrutable.

I shall see you so again many times, my friend Annabel Lee.—

The fact remains that I am in Montreal and Canada. And as the days run along I am reminded that I have in me the old Canadian instincts. The word "Canadian" has always called up in my mind a confused throng of things, like—porridge for tea, and Sir Hugh Mac Donald, and Dominion Day, and my aunt Elizabeth Mac Lane, and old-fashioned pictures of her majesty the queen, and Orangemen's Day, and "good-night" for good-evening, and "reel of cotton" for spool of thread, and "tin" instead of can, and Canadian cheese, and *rawsberries* in a patent pail, and the Queen's Own in Toronto, and soldiers in red coats, and children in Scotch kilts, and jam-tarts, and barley-sugar, and whitefish from Lake Winnipeg, and the C. P. R., and the Parliament at Ottawa, and coasting in toboggans,

and Lord Aberdeen, and everything-coming-over-from-England-so-much-better-and-cheaper-than-American-ware,—and all that sort of thing. And my mind has always had a color for Canada—a shade of mingled deep green and golden brown.

Even in Montreal, where so much is French, there is enough to stamp it as beyond question Canadian. One still sees marks of her majesty the queen—but shop-keepers assert confidently that "Edward is going to make a good king," and Canadian men are made up as nearly as possible after his pattern, stout and with that short pointed beard.

In the greenness of Dominion Square is the most beautiful piece of sculpture I have seen. All the statues that stand about in Montreal are finer than most of their kind, and there are no such hideous creations as are set up in Boston and

New York. The Dominion Square statue is a bronze figure of a Sir John A. Mac Donald. The face of the figure is all that is serene and benign, and the lines of the body and of the hands are made with strength and beauty. Whether it is like Sir John A. Mac Donald, one does not know—'tis enough that it's an exquisite piece of workmanship with which to adorn a city. And the Maisonneuve statue is a fine, handsome thing, and is altogether alive. The bronze is no bronze, but has seventeenth-century red blood in its veins, and the arm that is held high and the hand with the flag mean conquest and victory.

I shall see Quebec and the length of the blue river before I see you again, and they, like Montreal, will be mingled with a many-tinted looking-forward to being with you again.

High upon the tower of a gray-stone

building that I see from my window is a carved gorgon's head, a likeness of Medusa with snaky locks. She is hundreds of feet above me as I sit here, but I see the expression of her face plainly—it is desolate and discouraging. It says, Do you think you will see that fair lily Annabel Lee again? Well, then, how foolish are you in your day and generation! I in my years have seen the passing of many fair lilies. Always they pass.—

Tell me, Annabel Lee,—always do they pass? But no—I shall find you again. You will make all things many-tinted for a thousand thousands of gold days. And are we not good friends in way and manner? And do we not go the foot-pathway together?

But I wonder always why the gorgon seems so fearfully knowing.—

Always my love to you.

MARY MAC LANE.

XXIV

MY FRIEND ANNABEL LEE TO ME

AND after some days my friend Annabel Lee wrote me this upon a square of rice paper:

Boston,—Monday.

Dear Mary Mac Lane: — Don't you know a gorgon is the knowingest thing in the land?

You may believe what your friend says of fair lilies.

But have I ever said that I am a fair lily?

As for my eyes—they are good chiefly to see with. And they are bad for many things.

Yes—get thee home soon, child.

I miss you when I come to deck me

mornings with my lavender slip and my scarlet frock. And the gold marguerites have not been brushed since you went away.

Naught have I to bear me company except Ellen, the faithful little tan deer—and she can not wait upon me, and she cannot worship me.

What hast done with Martha Goneril the cat?

I would fain you had left her here.

But Mary Mac Lane — *you*. Do you know about it?

YOUR FRIEND ANNABEL LEE.

XXV

THE GOLDEN RIPPLE

MY friend Annabel Lee and I are similar to each other in a few, few ways. Daily we contemplate together a great, blank wall built up of dull, blue stones. It stands before us and we can not get over it, for it is too high; neither can we walk around it, for it is too long; and we can not go through it, for it is solid and very thick. It is directly across the road. We have both come but a short way on the road—so short that we can easily look back over our course to the point where we started. We did not walk together from there, but we have met each other now before the great, blank wall of blue stones.

We have stopped here, for we can not go on.

I wonder and conjecture much about the wall, and my friend Annabel Lee regards it sometimes with interest and sometimes with none.

And, times, we forget all about the wall and merely sit and rest in the shade it casts, or walk back on the road, or in the grass about it, or pluck a few wild sweet berries from the stunted wayside briers.

And, too, when a thunder storm comes up and the air is full of wind and rain slanting and whistling about us, we crouch close against the base of the wall, and we do not become so wet as we should were there no wall.

But that is only when the wind is from beyond it.

When the wind with its flood of rain comes toward us as we crouch by the wall

we are beaten and drenched and buffeted and driven hard against that cold, blue surface. And the ragged edges of the rocks make bruises on our foreheads.

Some days we become exceeding weary with looking at the great blank wall—and with having looked at it already for many a day, and many a day.

"It is so high and so thick," I say.

"It is so long," says my friend Annabel Lee.

To all appearances we have gone as far upon the road as we ever can go. We can not get over the wall of blue stones—and we can not walk round—and we can not go through. There is nothing to indicate that it will ever be removed.

The field for conjecture as to what lies on the other side of the road is so vast that we do not venture to conjecture.

But we have talked often and madly of the wall itself.

"Perhaps," I say, "it is that the wall is placed here before our eyes to hide from us our limitations."

"Perhaps," says my friend Annabel Lee, "it is that the wall itself is our limitations."

Which, if it is true, is very damnable.

For though human beings have done some divine things they have never gone beyond their limitations.

The blue of the stones in the wall is not a dark blue, but it is very cold. It is the color that is called stone blue.

It never changes.

The sun and the shade look alike upon it; and the wet rain does not brighten it; neither do thick clouds of dust make it dull.

It is stone blue.

Except for this:

Once in a number of days, in fair weather or foul, there will come upon the wide blankness a rippling like gold.

It lingers a second and vanishes—and appears again. And then it's gone until another time.

How tender, how lovely, how bright is the golden ripple against the cold, cold blue!

It is come and gone in a minute.

We do not know its coming or its going.

But while we see it our hearts beat high and fast.

"It may be," I say when it is gone, "that this golden ripple will show us some way to get beyond the wall where things are divine."

"It may be," says my friend Annabel Lee, "that the golden ripple will show us something divine among these few things on this side of the wall."

My friend, Annabel Lee—with your strong, brave little heart and your two strong little hands, you were with me in my weary, bitter day. You were brave enough for two. It is to you from me that a message will go from out of silences and over frozen hills in the years that are coming.

THE END

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